00058636

NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 23 January, 2019

Vincent Brooks, Day & Son, Lith.

Hot work in the jungle. Padding the prize.

TENT LIFE IN TIGERLAND,

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

SPORT AND WORK ON THE NEPAUL FRONTIER.

BEING

TWELVE YEARS' SPORTING REMINISCENCES OF A PIONEER PLANTER IN AN INDIAN FRONTIER DISTRICT.

58636

BY

THE HON. JAMES INGLIS, M.L.A.
("*Maori*"),
MINISTER FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, SYDNEY, N.S.W.;
AUTHOR OF "TIRHOOT RHYMES," "OUR AUSTRALIAN COUSINS," "OUR NEW ZEALAND COUSINS," ETC. ETC.

WITH TWENTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS IN CHROMO-LITHOGRAPHY.

- 2

A. HUTCHISON & SON,
SYDNEY AND BRISBANE.
1888.

(*All rights reserved.*)

58636

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

PREFATORY.

WHEN I wrote "Sport and Work on the Nepaul Frontier," a book which is incorporated with the present volume, I closed it with these words: "If this volume meets the approbation of the public, I may be tempted to draw further on a well-stocked memory, and gossip afresh on Indian life, Indian experiences, and Indian sport," &c. The book was undoubtedly well received. A cheap edition of many thousand copies was struck off by the "Franklin Square Press" in America, and was widely read in the United States; and in Australia regrets have been frequently expressed that the original edition had been exhausted. I am therefore to some extent justified in believing that my Indian gossip has fairly met with the approbation of a large section of the reading public. Hence in the present work I simply resume the thread of my sporting recollections. I have chosen my own way of telling my story and arranging my incidents, so as to add fresh interest, and enlist the attention and the goodwill of my readers as far as possible, and I hope I may have been fairly successful in doing this.

JAMES INGLIS.

SYDNEY, N.S.W.,
1888.

ORIGINAL PREFACE TO "SPORT AND WORK."

I WENT home in 1875 for a few months, after some twelve years' residence in India. What first suggested the writing of such a book as this, was the amazing ignorance of ordinary Indian life betrayed by people at home. The questions asked me about India, and our daily life there, showed in many cases such an utter want of knowledge, that I thought, surely there is room here for a chatty, familiar, unpretentious book for friends at home, giving an account of our every-day life in India, our labours and amusements, our toils and relaxations, and a few pictures of our ordinary daily surroundings in the far, far East.

Such then is the design of my book. I want to picture to my readers Planter Life in the Mofussil, or country districts of India; to tell them of our hunting, shooting, fishing, and other amusements; to describe our work, our play, and matter-of-fact incidents in our daily life; to describe the natives as they appear to us in our intimate every-day dealings with them; to illustrate their manners, customs, dispositions, observances and sayings, so far as these bear on our own social life.

I am no politician, no learned ethnologist, no sage theorist. I simply try to describe what I have seen, and hope to

enlist the attention and interest of my readers, in my reminiscences of sport and labour, in the villages and jungles on the far-off frontier of Nepaul.

I have tried to express my meaning as far as possible without Anglo-Indian and Hindustani words; where these have been used, as at times they could not but be, I have given a synonymous word or phrase in English, so that all my friends at home may know my meaning.

I know that my friends will be lenient to my faults, and even the sternest critic, if he look for it, may find some pleasure and profit in my pages.

JAS. INGLIS.

SYDNEY, N.S.W.
Oct., 1878.

Vincent Brooks, Day & Son, Lith.

Seidoglis

PREFACE.

I HAVE had so many inquiries for copies of "Sport and Work on the Nepaul Frontier," now out of print, that I resolved, when publishing my new book, "Tent Life in Tiger-land" (which is really a continuation of my planting and hunting experiences in India), to reprint the former volume, and the present double volume is the result of that resolve.

My "unpretentious chatty gossip" has been so favourably received by both critic and general reader, that I may be pardoned if I anticipate the same kindly reception for the present work.

I have written the new matter from my old sporting journals, at odd hours, as a recreation amid the worries and distractions of business and political life. It is therefore perhaps fortunate that I never pretended to be master of a graceful literary style.

Yet let me hope my book may not only interest and amuse but that my endeavours to give a faithful picture of planter life in India may help to remove some misconceptions, and enlist the sympathy of our fellow-countrymen for those gallant and kindly pioneers of peaceful conquest who are

doing so much to uphold the high honour and fair fame of the dear old mother land in the far-off Eastern dependency, so full of interest and mystery, and which (may I say it?) is still so little known or understood by the mass of average Britons at home.

Your obliged and faithful servant,

JAMES INGLIS.

CONTENTS.

Tent Life in Tigerland.

INTRODUCTION.

PAGE

My residence in favoured districts for sport—Purneah—Bhaugulpore—Kheri—How Indian descriptions strike the ordinary English reader—*Jogees* or *Fakeers*—Scenes and encounters in the jungle—The attitude of the sceptical inexperienced reader to records of Indian sport—Anecdote in illustration—An appeal to the reader 1

CHAPTER I.

TOO CLOSE TO BE PLEASANT.

The Koosee Valley—Our Hunt Club—The members—Our camp—"Old Mac"—The *must* elephant—A sudden alarm—A mad charge—Wreck of the camp—"Old Mac" in deadly peril—The Rescue—Reaction 6

CHAPTER II.

AT CLOSE QUARTERS WITH A TIGER.

Ryseree—A decaying village—Ravages of the river—Joe's yarn—The ruined shrine—"Sign" of tiger—The bamboo thicket—A foolhardy resolve—Tracking tiger on all fours—Inside the thicket—Inside the enclosure—Inside the temple—The bats—"Alone with a man-eater"—The tigress at bay—"Minutes that seem like hours"—Well done, good revolver—"Never again on foot"—Wild beast statistics from *The Saturday Review* . 20

CHAPTER III.

A NOCTURNAL ADVENTURE.

PAGE

Out for *Khubber*—A clean shot—The *Loha sarung*, or sarus crane—A strange place for a live fish—Wealth of game—A varied bag—My yarn—Leopards superior to the tiger in daring and ferocity—Partiality to a diet of dogs—A seed harvest camp—Leopards close by—A sultry night under canvas—Dozing off—Is it a nightmare?—A terrible awakening—Eye to eye—A perilous interviewer—The fatal shot 38

CHAPTER IV.

"THE HABITATIONS OF HORRID CRUELTY."

Back to camp—A piteous burden—The agonised mother—The father's story—Pity and indignation—An ingrate servant—Fiendish barbarity—The long weary night—Welcome arrival of the old doctor—Hovering 'twixt life and death—Skilful surgery—"Who did it?"—The tell-tale slate—How the deed was done—Retribution 49

CHAPTER V.

ROUGH-RIDING IN INDIA.

News of a "kill"—Elephants in line—The jungle at early dawn—Half through the *Baree*—A tiger charges—A bolting elephant—Smash goes the *howdah*—Escape of "Butty"—Wasps and elephants—"Dotterel"—A razor-backed elephant—"That demon of a dog"—Bolted—A shaker—How to tame a vicious tusker 62

CHAPTER VI.

THE BEAR AND THE BLACKSMITH.

A Bancoorah yarn—Billy the blacksmith—The black sloth bear—Camp at Susunneah marble quarries—A transformation scene—Night melodious—*Locale* of the hunt—To our posts!—The beat—Billy is dry—"Look out! there's a bear!"—Down goes Billy—Bruin a-top—A novel wrestling match—Intense excitement—Over the precipice!—Search for the body—Miraculous escape—"Twank-a-diddle-oh"—More about bears—The surveyor's fight for life—A terrible disfigurement—Marvels of modern surgery—A sweetheart true as steel—A slap at sceptics—"Truth stranger than fiction" 74

CHAPTER VII.

NEVER TRUST A TIGER.

PAGE

Exaggerated yarns—Man-eating tigers—An easy prey—"On the watch"—A common tragedy—"Mourning in some lowly hut" The Pertaubgunj tiger—Shifting camp—An obstinate elephant—River-side scenery—Revolver practice—*Salamee*—Rapacity of servants—A halt—Enquiry—We form line—The beat—Elephants uneasy—The man-eater breaks cover—A tame termination—False security—"Look out, boys; it's alive!"—A dying effort and a costly bite—An instance of cool heroism—In the jaws of a tiger—A plucky rescue—Moral: "Never trust a tiger" 98

CHAPTER VIII.

OLD TIMES.

The old well—The Fakeer—A pious old hermit—*Jogees*—Pagan cruelties—Peter the braggart—Soured by bad luck—Scotch Hindostanee—Peter pot valiant—His "teeger" story—An ignominious collapse—The real truth of the matter—The "Blue Devils"—Practical joking—The rough pioneer days—Police tortures—"Old Hulman Sahib"—A novel punishment—The old *régime* changed—Modern progress 115

CHAPTER IX.

A CHAPTER ON "PIG-STICKING."

Getting under weigh—Tally-ho!—Game afoot—A cunning old tusker—One man down—At our wits' end—A *ghat* ahead—The boar is a "jinker"—A comical interlude—"Now's the chance"—First spear!—A desperate fight for life—Death of the boar—Eulogy on the sport—*The Queenslander* on Indian sports—"Hints to Hog Hunters" from *The Oriental Sporting Magazine* 132

CHAPTER X.

AN EXCITING NIGHT WATCH.

Belated at Fusseah—The old *Chowkeydar*—Searching for supper—The dilapidated bungalow—The *Gomastah's* news—Tigers close by—Proposal to sit up for a shot—Shooting from pits—Night scenes in the jungle—A silent watch—A misty figure through

PAGE

the gloom—A sudden roar—The challenge accepted—The plot thickens—The young tiger and the old boar—A death-struggle—Savage beasts in mortal conflict—Defiant to the last—Trophies of the night 150

CHAPTER XI.

POLICE RASCALITY.

The native village police then and now—The power of the *Daroga*—Exactions from the peasantry—My attitude to the police—The village jury system—My neighbour down the river—A bungalow of the olden time—The *chabutra*—Changed methods now of dealing with natives—Taking villages in lease—Measuring the new lands—Native disaffection—Police plottings—The *Dhaus*—A welcome visitor—Out with the doctor—Put up a tiger—A resultless beat—A day's general shooting—Events down the river—Cholera—Death in the lonely hut—Spies at work—A devilish plot—Concocting false evidence—A late call—Making a night of it—In the morning—Accused of murder—The arrest—Reserves his defence—The trial—Excitement in court—Appearances all against the planter—Turning the tables—The case breaks down—Discomfiture of the Police 164

CHAPTER XII.

AN EVENTFUL DAY.

The famine of 1874—Nature of relief works—Fatalism—Humane tendencies of British rule—Epidemics—Sharp contrasts—Crowded incidents of planter life—A fierce hail-storm—A runaway elephant—Through the forest—Hue and cry after a thief—A desperate fugitive—Setting an ambush—Female furies—An exciting diversion—A desperate scuffle—Capture—Tactics of the female gipsies—Horrible cruelty—A hapless little one—Outwitted!—The robber escapes—Feasting amid famine—A Brahmin *bhoj*—Appearance of the village—The guests—The cookery—The feast—Strange plates—A motley *melangé*—Prodigious appetite—Once more on the road—Reach Soopole—Hospitable reception 189

CHAPTER XIII.

FAMINE AND FIGHTING.

Early spring in India—"The Black District"—Desperate straits—One ghastly group—Relief works—Conservatism of natives—The

PAGE

old easy-going style of work—A zealous young reformer—Glowing visions—Wheelbarrow reform—Irritating—Explaining—Theory—Actual practice—Back to the old style—The coolies—Sad scenes—Poor suffering humanity—The terrible hunger—Back to Hoolas—The seed industry—Native dodgery—Tricks and tests of the seed trade—Mode of contract—Fluctuations of the market—A slippery neighbour—News of a meditated looting expedition—The *Golail*—Preparing for a fight—Call out the levies—Disposition of our forces—News of the raiders—Confronting the robbers—Their insolent audacity—A knock-down blow—"Wigs on the green"—A regular ruction—"Loot" and "lay on"—The tide of battle—Victory! 208

CHAPTER XIV.

CASTE CHARACTERISTICS.

Curiosities of the census—Quaint characters—The Bohemians of the East—Mendicant friars—Actors and jugglers—The Story Teller—"After a weary day"—A visitor in camp—His appearance—His reception—The gaping circle of listeners—The story—"Petumber and Mahaboobun"—The story of their love—A rival—Plot and counterplot—The drama develops—Petumber's sudden return—Confusion of the wicked plotter—Jealousy—Wifely fidelity—The darkened bath chamber—Assumption of a strange character—The furious sandal—Crack!—"Tung-ng-ng!"—Acting up to his character—"Glug-glug-glug!"—Another good story—"The Brahmin and the Bunneah"—Sanctity and pretensions of the Brahmins—Their power on the wane—Progress of modern thought—An enlightened Hindoo on the decadence of priestcraft—Beneficence of British rule 231

CHAPTER XV.

PERILS BY FLOOD.

Native characteristics—Pioneer work—Riverside villages—The harvest of the flood—the cousins—Bad blood—A murderous blow—My arrival on the scene—We must find the body—The boat—The river in flood—Swept away by the torrent—Shooting the rapids—Straining every nerve to avoid the main stream—One spot of refuge amid the raging waters—The deserted cattle camp—The floating island—Teeming with fugitive life—Unexpected flotsam—A babe in strange company—The mangy tiger—Rescue—Return to factory 255

CHAPTER XVI.

A JUNGLE TRAGEDY.

PAGE

Varieties of winged game—News of a "big beat"—Get to camp—The marshes country—"Hunter's pot"—Charge of a wounded bull buffalo—A terrible impalement—On the track—Difficult country—Slow and dangerous tracking—Indications of our quarry—An unsuccessful day—A bad night—News with the dawn—Resume our quest—Horrible signs—Sickening gusts—A ghastly sight—Close of the tragedy—The funeral pyre. 268

CHAPTER XVII.

"A DAY AT THE DUCKS."

Fresh sensations at every footstep—The endless procession to the water—Daybreak—The annual exodus begins—The Kutmullea *Pokra*—The first shot—What a commotion!—Tank shooting—A good bag for the pot—The river banks—River scenery—What variety of life!—Shoot an alligator—A miss—entangled in a *Rahur Khet*—Hornets—A sudden and unwelcome *rencontre*—A lucky escape—In the Oude jungles—Abundance of big game—A quiet saunter through the forest—The coolies give news of *nilghai*—Muster the coolies for a beat—Take up a good position—Jungle sights and sounds—Sound of the distant beaters—My first *nilghai*—Sudden appearance of a bull rhino—A glorious prize indeed!—Measurement 278

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE WILDS OF OUDE.

New surroundings—Waste land grants—A forest Alsatia—Pioneer work—The bungalow and its environments—My pets—An outpost near the Sarda River—Reducing chaos to order—Surveying the country—A likely spot for tiger—Send Juggroo for the elephant—A sudden interruption—A roar and a panic—The young tiger charges—A picture of savage grace—Lucky escape and fortunate shot—Another surprise—Advent of the elephant—Preparing to beat—*Motee* refuses—More elephants needed—Renew the beat the next day—Forming line—A plucky charge—A stampede—The coolies refuse—Trying it single-handed—Once more to the charge—A hit!—The tigress turns tail—A foolish resolve—Following the tigress—"A dry and weary wilderness"—Cross the Sarda—Intense excitement—A stern chase—

PAGE

In a dangerous fix—Hopelessly lost—"No sign of life or water"—Deadly thirst—Delirium—I am deserted—A terrible night—Digging for water—Unconsciousness—Found by the searchers . 300

CHAPTER XIX.

INCIDENTS OF THE "BIG BEAT."

News from the military—Arrangements for grazing commissariat elephants—Advent of a jolly party—News of big game—An imposing procession—The start—The country—Lagging behind—A sudden apparition—"A Sambur, by Jove!!"—Only a Swamp deer after all—Points of difference—We proceed down the river—A likely spot for game—A sudden diversion—The monkey's warning—A hurried consultation—Briggs left on the watch—Grows impatient—Determines to reconnoitre—A soliloquy—A wary stalk—"A sight that sets his ears a tingling"—"Angry green eyes glaring"—Bang!—A miss—A shot and a charge simultaneously—Bullet and teeth both "get home"—Poor Briggs carried home—After the cubs next day—The "old General" in charge—Discovery and capture of the cubs—A likely spot for leopard—Gopal on the track—"Not one but two leopards"—They will not break—Halt for tiffin and send for fireworks—One more try—The end of a memorable day. 322

CHAPTER XX.

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS IN A LIVING TOMB.

Native and European ideas of sport contrasted—Illustrations—Pitfalls—How formed—A morning tour of inspection—Prepare for pea-fowl—Method of the sport—Start a herd of spotted deer—Off for a stalk—Noonday heat and stillness—An anxious wait—Death of the stag—Wending homewards—A treacherous path—Hidden pitfalls—A sudden shock—Miraculous escape—Happy issue—Visit the "old General"—His camp levee—A yarn after tiffin—"The General" takes a trip north after tiger—A rascally groom—Trapped in a pit of miry clay—Caged with a cobra—A terrible fight for life—Reaction—Breaking of the monsoon—A new danger—Doomed to be drowned like a rat in a hole—Rescue at the eleventh hour—A parting tribute to the glad old days and the gallant and true old comrades—A few parting words—Conclusion 341

CHAPTER XXI.

A CHAPTER ON GUNS.

Remarks on guns—How to cure skins—Different recipes—Conclusion 362

Sport and Work on the Nepaul Frontier.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Province of Behar—Boundaries—General description — District of Chumparun—Mooteeharree—The town and lake—Native houses —The Planters' Club—Segoulie 369

CHAPTER II.

My first charge—How we get our lands—Our home farm—System of farming—Collection of rents—The planter's duties . . 374

CHAPTER III.

How to get our crop—The "Dangurs"—Farm servants and their duties — Kassee Rai — Hoeing — Ploughing — "Oustennie"— Coolies at work—Sowing—Difficulties the plant has to contend with—Weeding 380

CHAPTER IV.

Manufacture of Indigo — Loading the vats — Beating — Boiling, straining, and pressing—Scene in the Factory—Fluctuation of produce—Chemistry of Indigo 391

CHAPTER V.

Parewah factory—A "Bobbery Pack"—Hunt through a village after a cat—The pariah dog of India—Fate of "Pincher"—Rampore hound—Persian greyhound—Caboolee dogs—A jackal hunt— Incidents of the chase 402

CHAPTER VI.

Fishing in India—Hereditary trades—The boatmen and fishermen of India—Their villages—Nets—Modes of fishing—Curiosities relating thereto—Catching an alligator with a hook—Exciting capture—Crocodiles—Shooting an alligator—Death of the man-eater 410

CHAPTER VII.

PAGE

Native superstitions—Charming a bewitched woman—Exorcising ghosts from a field—Witchcraft—The witchfinder or "Ojah"—Influence of fear—Snake bites—How to cure them—How to discover a thief—Ghosts and their habits—The "Haddick" or native bone-setter—Cruelty to animals by natives 424

CHAPTER VIII.

Our annual race meet—The arrivals—The camps—The "ordinary"—The course—"They're off"—The race—The steeple-chase—Incidents of the meet—The ball 435

CHAPTER IX.

Pig-sticking in India—Varieties of boar—Their size and height—Ingenious mode of capture by the natives—The "Batan" or buffalo herd—Pigs charging—Their courage and ferocity—Destruction of game—A close season for game 443

CHAPTER X.

Kuderent jungle—Charged by a pig—The biter bit—"Mac" after the big boar—The horse for pig-sticking—The line of beaters—The boar breaks—"Away! Away!"—First spear—Pig-sticking at Peeprah—The old "lungra" or cripple—A boar at bay—Hurrah for pig-sticking! 451

CHAPTER XI.

The sal forests—The jungle goddess—The trees in the jungle—Appearance of the forests—Birds—Varieties of parrots—A "beat" in the forest—The "skekarry"—Mehrman Singh and his gun—The Banturs, a jungle tribe of wood-cutters—Their habits—A village feast—We beat for deer—Habits of the spotted deer—Waiting for the game—Mehrman Singh gets drunk—Our bag—Pea-fowl and their habits—How to shoot them—Curious custom of the Nepaulese—How Juggroo was tricked, and his revenge . 461

CHAPTER XII.

The leopard—How to shoot him—Gallant encounter with a wounded one—Encounter with a leopard in a Dak bungalow—Pat shoots

PAGE

two leopards—Effects of the Express bullet—The "Sirwah Purrub," or annual festival of huntsmen—The Hindoo Ryot—Rice-planting and harvest—Poverty of the ryot—His apathy—Village fires—Want of sanitation 479

CHAPTER XIII.

Description of a native village—Village functionaries—The barber—Bathing habits—The village well—The school—The children—The village bazaar—The landowner and his dwelling—The "Putwarrie" or village accountant — The blacksmith — The "Punchayiet" or village jury system—Our legal system in India —Remarks on the administration of justice 491

CHAPTER XIV.

A native village continued—The watchman or "chowkeydar"—The temple — Brahmins—Idols—Religion—Humility of the poorer classes—Their low condition—Their apathy—The police—Their extortions and knavery—An instance of police rascality—Corruption of native officials—The Hindoo unfit for self-government 506

CHAPTER XV.

Jungle wild fruits—Curious method of catching quail—Quail nets —Quail caught in a blacksmith's shop—Native wrestling—The trainer—How they train for a match—Rules of wrestling—Grips —A wrestling match—Incidents of the struggle—Description of a match between a Brahmin and a blacksmith—Sparring for the grip—The blacksmith has it—The struggle — The Brahmin getting the worst of it—Two to one on the little 'un!—The Brahmin plays the waiting game, turns the tables *and* the blacksmith—Remarks on wrestling 519

CHAPTER XVI.

Indigo seed growing—Seed buying and buyers—Tricks of sellers—Tests for good seed—The threshing-floor—Seed cleaning and packing—Staff of servants—Despatching the bags by boat—The "Pooneah" or rent day—Purneah planters—Their hospitality—The rent day a great festival—Preparation—Collection of rents—Feast to retainers—The reception in the evening—Tribute—Old customs—Improvisatores and bards—Nautches—Dancing and music—The dance of the Dangurs—Jugglers and itinerary showmen—"Bara Roopes," or actors and mimics.—Their different styles of acting 533

CHAPTER XVII.

PAGE

The Koosee jungles—Ferries—Jungle roads—The rhinoceros—We go to visit a neighbour—We lose our way and get belated—We fall into a quicksand—No ferry boat—Camping out on the sand—Two tigers close by—We light a fire—The boat at last arrives—Crossing the stream—Set fire to the boatman's hut—Swim the horses—They are nearly drowned—We again lose our way in the jungle—The towing path, and how boats are towed up the river—We at last reach the factory—News of rhinoceros in the morning—Off we start, but arrive too late—Death of the rhinoceros—His dimensions—Description—Habits—Rhinoceros in Nepaul—The old "Major Captan"—Description of Nepaulese scenery—Immigration of Nepaulese—Their fondness for fish—They eat it putrid—Exclusion of Europeans from Nepaul—Resources of the country—Must sooner or later be opened up—Influences at work to elevate the people—Planters and factories, chief of these—Character of the planter—His claims to consideration from Government 547

CHAPTER XVIII.

The tiger—His habitat—Shooting on foot—Modes of shooting—A tiger hunt on foot—The scene of the hunt—The beat—Incidents of the hunt—Fireworks—The tiger charges—The elephant bolts—The tigress will not break—We kill a half-grown cub—Try again for the tigress—Unsuccessful—Exaggerations in tiger stories—My authorities—The brothers S.—Ferocity and structure of the tiger—His devastations—His frame-work, teeth, &c.—A tiger at bay—His unsociable habits—Fight between tiger and tigress—Young tigers—Power and strength of the tiger—Examples—His cowardice—Charge of a wounded tiger—Incidents connected with wounded tigers—A spined tiger—Boldness of young tigers—Cruelty—Cunning—Night scenes in the jungle—Tiger killed by a wild boar—His cautious habits—General remarks . . 568

CHAPTER XIX.

The tiger's mode of attack—The food he prefers—Varieties of prey—Examples—What he eats first—How to tell the kill of a tiger—Appetite fierce—Tiger choked by a bone—Two varieties of tiger—The royal Bengal—Description—The hill tiger—His description—The two compared—Length of the tiger—How to measure tigers—Measurements—Comparison between male and female—Number of young at a birth—The young cubs—Mother teaching

PAGE

cubs to kill—Education and progress of the young tiger—Wariness and cunning of the tiger—Hunting incidents showing their powers of concealment—Tigers taking to water—Examples—Swimming powers—Caught by floods—Story of the Soonderbund tigers 585

CHAPTER XX.

No regular breeding season—Beliefs and prejudices of the natives about tigers—Bravery of the "gwalla," or cowherd caste—Claw-marks on trees—Fondness for particular localities—Tiger in Mr. F.'s howdah—Springing powers of tigers—Lying close in cover—Incident—Tiger shot with No. 4 shot—Man clawed by a tiger—Knocked its eye out with a sickle—Same tiger subsequently shot in same place—Tigers easily killed—Instances—Effect of shells on tiger and buffalo—Best weapon and bullets for tiger—Poisoning tigers denounced—Natives prone to exaggerate in giving news of tiger—Anecdote—Beating for tiger—Line of elephants—Padding dead game—Line of seventy-six elephants—Captain of the hunt—Flags for signals in the line—"Naka," or scout ahead—Usual time for tiger shooting on the Koosee—Firing the jungle—The line of fire at night—Foolish to shoot at moving jungle—Never shoot down the line—Motions of different animals in the grass 602

CHAPTER XXI.

Howdahs and howdah-ropes—Mussulman custom—Killing animals for food—Mysterious appearance of natives when an animal is killed—Fastening dead tigers to the pad—Present mode wants improving—Incident illustrative of this—Dangerous to go close to wounded tigers—Examples—Footprints of tigers—Call of the tiger—Natives and their powers of description—How to beat successfully for tiger—Description of a beat—Disputes among the shooters—Awarding tigers—Cutting open the tiger—Native idea about the liver of the tiger—Signs of a tiger's presence in the jungle—Vultures—Do they scent their quarry or view it?—A vulture carrion feast 616

CHAPTER XXII.

We start for a tiger hunt on the Nepaul frontier—Indian scenery near the boarder—Lose our way—Cold night—The river by night—Our boat and boatmen—Tigers calling on the bank—An anxious moment—Fire at and wound the tigress—Reach camp—

PAGE

The Nepaulee's adventure with a tiger—The old Major—His appearance and manners—The pompous Jemadar—Nepaulese proverb—Firing the jungle—Start a tiger and shoot him—Another in front—Appearance of the fires by night—The tiger escapes—Too dark to follow up—Coolie shot by mistake during a former hunt 627

CHAPTER XXIII.

We resume the beat—The hog-deer—Nepaulese villages—Village granaries—Tiger in front—A hit! a hit!—Following up the wounded tiger—Find him dead—Tiffin in the village—The Patair jungle—Search for tiger—Gone away!—An elephant steeplechase in pursuit—Exciting chase—The Morung jungle—Magnificent scenery—Skinning the tiger—Incidents on tiger hunting 642

CHAPTER XXIV.

Camp of the Nepaulee chief—Quicksands—Elephants crossing rivers—Tiffin at the Nepaulee camp—We beat the forest for tiger—Shoot a young tiger—Red ants in the forest—Bhowras or ground bees—The *ursus labialis* or long-lipped bear—Recross the stream—Florican—Stag running the gauntlet of flame—Our bag—Start for factory—Remarks on elephants—Precautions useful for protection from the sun in tiger shooting—The *puggree*—Cattle breeding in India, and wholesale deaths of cattle from disease—Nathpore—Ravages of the river—Mrs. Gray, an old resident in the jungle—Description of her surroundings . . 654

CHAPTER XXV.

Exciting jungle scene—The camp—All quiet—Advent of the cowherds—A tiger close by—Proceed to the spot—Encounter between tigress and buffaloes—Strange behaviour of the elephant—Discovery and capture of four cubs—Joyful return to camp—Death of the tigress—Night encounter with a leopard—The haunts of the tiger and our shooting grounds . . . 670

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

TENT LIFE IN TIGERLAND.

HOT WORK IN THE JUNGLE—PADDING THE PRIZE	*Chromo.*	*Frontispiece*	
PORTRAIT OF AUTHOR	„	*to face page*	vii
HOWDAH ELEPHANTS—A STAUNCH TUSKER .	„	„	16
BULLOCK HACKRIES, OR NATIVE CARTS . .	„	„	44
GETTING ELEPHANTS READY FOR THE BEAT .	„	„	64
RETURNING TO CAMP THROUGH THE MARSHES.	„	„	80
DEATH OF THE MAN-EATER	„	„	108
JUNGLE TROPHIES—SKINNING THE TIGER .	„	„	160
NUTHS—WANDERING GIPSY THIEVES . .	„	„	196
SNAKE CHARMERS	„	„	232
ACROBATS	„	„	248
HIGH-CLASS BRAHMINS—PUNDITS . . .	„	„	253
HAUNT OF THE BUFFALO	„	„	273
NATIVE BOATS AND BATHING GHAT—A TYPICAL INDIAN RIVER SCENE	„	„	289
BULL RHINOCEROS—A GLORIOUS PRIZE . .	„	„	298
AN INDIAN RIVER SCENE—ELEPHANTS ENJOYING THEMSELVES	„	„	336

SPORT AND WORK ON THE NEPAUL FRONTIER.

TIGER HUNTING—RETURN TO THE CAMP . . *Chromo, Frontispiece*
COOLIE'S HUT 387
INDIGO BEATING VATS . . . . *Chromo, to face p.* 391
INDIGO BEATERS AT WORK IN THE VAT . „ „ 394
INDIAN FACTORY PEON 400
INDIGO PLANTER'S HOUSE . . . . *Chromo, to face p.* 402
PIG STICKERS 460
CARPENTERS AND BLACKSMITHS AT WORK . *Chromo, to face p.* 501
HINDOO VILLAGE TEMPLES . . . . „ „ 507

TENT LIFE IN TIGERLAND.

INTRODUCTION.

My residence in favoured districts for sport—Purneah—Bhaugulpore—Kheri—How Indian descriptions strike the ordinary English reader—*Jogees* or *Fakeers*—Scenes and encounters in the jungle—The attitude of the sceptical inexperienced reader to records of Indian sport—Anecdote in illustration—An appeal to the reader.

FOR some years I enjoyed the privilege of residence in two of the very finest sporting districts of India.

Purneah and North Bhaugulpore, bordering on the *Terai*, is admittedly even for India a very sportsman's paradise, and is probably, or was then at all events, the best tiger-shooting ground in the world. Having practically supreme control over many miles of territory there, and feudal jurisdiction over scores of villages and leagues of jungle, it would be strange if, with my ardent love of field-sports, I did not have some noteworthy experienc es.

In the district of Kheri, in the North-West Provinces, I had charge subsequently of very extensive grants of "waste," or untilled jungle lands, and was actively engaged in reclaiming the virgin forest, and administering great estates in a wild and comparatively unsettled country. Here again the opportunities for sport—from rhino and tiger-shooting, down to ortolan and plover—are probably only second in all India to Purneah; and here again I had manifest opportunities

of filling my sporting journal with many items of more than ordinary interest.

I was brought, too, into constant contact with past masters in woodcraft and jungle lore. I was a good listener as well as an industrious scribe, and having some literary leanings, I took care to embellish my journals with the records of many a stirring adventure poured into my willing ear in the shadow of the tent, at the time when the camp fire casts its ruddy glow on the motley *ménage* of a good old-fashioned *mofussil shikar* party.

Then again, I was rather a favourite with my native servants and companions, always trying to treat them kindly and to mix freely with them, and was not above listening to their stories; and I am indebted for many a curious bit of description to the unaffected narration of some one or other of my keenly-observant native foresters or huntsmen.

To the ordinary reader in an English or Australian town, or to any one indeed who has not lived in India, the bare recital of many of the most common incidents of a day's shooting in that land of glowing colour, teeming life, and romantic associations, seems exaggerated, strained and unnatural. To come suddenly, for instance, on a gaunt, haggard, dishevelled devotee, hollow-eyed and emaciated, his almost nude frame daubed over with barbaric pigments, brandishing curious-looking weapons, shouting uncouth discordant rhymes, or waking the forest echoes with cries like those of the wild beasts, among whose jungle solitudes he takes up his abode, would rather startle the nerves of the ordinary dweller in cities. And yet these wandering *jogees* or *fakeers* are to be met with in almost every jungle from Cape Comorin to the Spiti.

To meet face to face a surly boar, having tusks that would badly "rip" an elephant, and who resents your intrusive approach—to note the stealthy slouching gait of some lithe leopard, stalking the peaceful antelope or graceful spotted

deer, yourself all unseen, is a sensation that lives in your memory—to gaze on the shock of combat between two antlered stags, or the snarling battle for the fragments of a carrion feed between hissing vultures, or howling wolves, is a revelation of savage animal life that one does not soon forget. To lie on the river-bank and watch the animation and picturesque grouping in the broad shallow of the troubled stream below, as the great elephants gambol in the cooling pool and splash their heated heaving sides with spurts and dashes of water from the river, is a sight that would gladden an artist's heart. To mark the rapid flight over the sequestered forest tank of myriads of bright-plumaged water-fowl, to see the long-legged waders running nimbly round the sedgy marge, or view the bending broad leaves of the water-lily, lapping pearly globules from the cool clear tank, as the blue fowl step daintily from one to the other, pressing them for a moment beneath the surface; and then as the lazy *raho* pops his round nose above water to suck in a fly; to see the long ugly serrated back of the man-eating saurian surge slowly through the yielding element—that is a picture which one can never hope to see equalled, in varied interest, in any other land. And, most thrilling and memorable of all, to see the convulsive upward leap, and hear the throttled gasping roar of a wounded tiger, as the whiff of powder smoke from your trusty gun salutes your nostrils like grateful incense—that's one of the sensations that makes the dull pulses throb and quicken their beat; and all these, dear Reader, and hundreds more, are within the compass of one day's successful shooting in the dear old happy hunting-grounds of a good *mofussil* district in India.

To any one who truly loves nature, who has perhaps happily something of the artist and the poet, be it ever so faint, in his soul, as well as the ardour and enthusiasm of the sportsman, to that one who has experienced even a little of the charm of the Indian sporting life—all the sneers and

stupid imbecilities of the untravelled and inexperienced sceptic, to whom the hunter's stories and reminiscences are so many "idle tales," are harmless, and do not even cause a momentary irritation; they excite his good-natured pity. Beyond a doubt the least experienced in jungle-craft are very often the most prone to exaggerate; but to any one who has gone through even one season's shooting in India, in a good district, the truth is very easily winnowed from the admixture of falsehood; and to such an one it is matter of constant acknowledgment that, so far as Indian sport is concerned, "Truth is often stranger than fiction."

This attitude of cynical unbelief, and partly good-humoured, partly contemptuous scepticism, in regard especially to Indian tiger stories, is very humorously illustrated by the following good anecdote, which I cut out of a Sydney newspaper some time ago—

"A well-known Anglo-Indian *raconteur*, on his first reappearance in London, was one of a dozen or more guests at a dinner-party in Kensington, and among them he was delighted to see his old friend, Sir D. M., who had retired some years previously from the bench of a provincial High Court. He recollected a startling incident connected with a tiger in which he and Sir D. M. had both shared. At a fitting opportunity he introduced the story, and, feeling confidence in his old friend's memory and his readiness to vouch for the truth of every detail, gave it with all the facts, especially with one special fact that was rather hard to believe. When telling it, therefore, he laid stress upon the presence at the scene of his former colleague in the service, and looked pointedly at him. The expected response did not come; but Sir D. M.'s face wore a look of perfect incredulity. 'My dear fellow,' he said at last, on direct appeal, 'I am very sorry, but I recollect nothing whatever about it.' The *raconteur* of course collapsed there and then. Boiling over with rage, he sought his friend as soon as he could get at him.

in private, and remonstrated with him on his strange lapse of memory, and appealed to him whether, even if he did not fully recollect the occurrence, it might not have been possible to save his credit with the company by a less positive disclaimer. 'My dear J.,' replied the old Judge, 'I remembered perfectly well the incident you were telling; but I remarked that all the people at the table considered you were lying. If, then, I had corroborated you, the only result would have been that they would have set me down as a liar too, and my regard for our host made me wish to avoid a double catastrophe.'"

In the following pages, my second instalment of sporting recollections, and descriptions of all the varied and strange incidents of jungle life in our far-off Indian hunting-grounds, may perchance call up a feeling similar to that exhibited by the guests at the table in the foregoing anecdote; but I well know that there are many of my "dear old chums" whose kindly remembrance of the truth will be refreshed by the recital of old stories, half forgotten, it may be, till my narration quickens the sleeping memory; and there will be many too, I hope and trust, who will go hand in hand with me through the villages and jungles trusting to my guidance; and who, over the evening camp-fire, will listen with sympathy, interest and kindly appreciation, as I endeavour to portray to them a real presentment of the life of a pioneer in the Indian back-woods, and with a lenient regard to my shortcomings, may reward me by their attention, and inspire me afresh by their confidence and goodwill.

And now to our recollections of TENT LIFE IN TIGERLAND.

CHAPTER I.

TOO CLOSE TO BE PLEASANT.

The Koosee Valley—Our Hunt Club—The members—Our camp—"Old Mac"—The *must* elephant—A sudden alarm—A mad charge—Wreck of the camp—"Old Mac" in deadly peril—The Rescue—Reaction.

THIS is how it was!

We had had a hard day of it in the jungles. It had been even hotter than usual for the time of the year, although it was March, when the hot winds sweep like a sirocco over the waving leagues of tall dry elephant grass and dreary expanses of arid burning sand, that compose the peerless hunting-grounds through which the Koosee rolls its flood.

The Koosee is one of the tributaries of the Ganges—the sacred "Gunga Mai" of the Hindoos; a stream with more weird, mysterious, fantastic associations connected with its swift, silent, turbid flow, and palm-fringed temple-crowned banks, than perhaps any other river ever mentioned in the history of man.

The Koosee comes directly down with a turbulent impetuous rush from the towering Himalayas, those eternal abodes of ice and snow, the majestic solitary throne of mighty "Indra"—"the ruler of the universe." The main stream runs with a swift milky flood, dividing the two great indigo and rice districts of Bhaugulpore and Purneah. When swollen by the melting of the snows or by the annual rains, the river overflows its banks, and at such times presents the appearance of a broad swiftly-flowing

sea, for its breadth from bank to bank is often ten, and in some places nearly twenty miles across. In the dry season, the waters—always of the same milky hue—are confined to innumerable channels; some so shallow that the stilted plover can wade across; and others running deep and strong, with a ceaseless gurgling swish that would sweep the stateliest elephant off its feet, and carry its ponderous bulk far down the stream. These streams seem to run at random over this deltaic plain. Diverging here, reuniting there; forming a wide bend in one place, and cutting direct through the sandy soil in another; the face of the country is split up into an infinitude of islands, and reticulated everywhere by a network of dry channels and shifting sandbanks; and over all, wherever there is an inch of soil, the stately elephant grass spreads its feathery mantle, and when the light, silvery, filmy reeds are in flower, the landscape seems like a vast silver swaying sea; with ever and anon a steely bluish vein casting back the burnished reflection of the burning sun, where the silent river pursues its impetuous course, to join the dark mysterious waters of the mighty Gunga.

Every year the river spreads here a layer of fertilising mud, and there a covering of destructive sand over the valley, or rather plain—for it seems as flat as a board. Countless herds of cattle come from the far-off highlands, and populous villages of Tirhoot, to graze on the succulent young shoots and undergrowth that quickly spring up. These herds are closely followed by the stealthy ferocious tiger; while the savage cunning rhinoceros, too, may be found at rare intervals. Of wild buffaloes, who love to haunt the frequent swamps and marshes—jackals, wolves, hyænas, and other predatory brutes, there is no end—swamp-deer, hog-deer, sambhur, and other cervine species, herd together in the tall grateful cover of the friendly jungle grass—and wild pig, porcupine, wild fowl, game

fowl, and other animals, dear to the sportsman, are to be met with in incredible numbers. The plains of the Koosee are indeed the sportsman's paradise. The great height of the jungle grass, however (it grows in huge tufts, like canes or reeds), makes it almost impossible to follow your game with any hope of success, unless you have elephants. The expanse of grass, too, is so vast—the creeks, the channels, and concealed watercourses—the runs or tracks made by the wild animals themselves, or by the tame herds—are so numerous and intricate, that unless one has a good "line" of elephants, he need not expect to make a great bag. Unless one were acquainted with every inch of the country, it would be as useless to look for a tiger, or rhinoceros, or even herd of wild buffaloes, with only one or two elephants, as it would be to look for the proverbial needle in a bottle of hay.

Every year, therefore, when the hot March winds began to blow, when the grass had become sapless and brittle, and rustled with harsh grating sound as the blast swept over it; when the cattle had trod down all the dried leaves and withered twigs, till all the country under foot was a vast magazine of light tindery material that the least spark would set into a blaze; when the indigo was all sown in the lowlands and uplands; when the village rents had been collected, and the *gramies* or thatching coolies had begun to make the annual repairs on the roof of the bungalow, enveloping the rooms in dust, and ejecting spiders, centipedes, scorpions, bats, rats, lizards, and snakes from their hidden haunts under the rafters and *chutts;*—then would we get the camping furniture from the *godown,* erect the tent in the *compound,* and thoroughly repair it, furbish up our battery of guns, cast bullets and fill cartridges; and then sending *purwanas* or *chitthis* (orders or compliments), as the case might be, to every wealthy native round about the factory, who could borrow, beg, or steal an elephant, asking

them to forward the mighty animals to our hunting camp; we would prepare for a *burra shikar*, that is, a month's tiger-shooting in the game-infested *Dyarahs* of the Koosee.

It would take me too long to describe our camp furniture or baggage. In the Koosee district, a few of us indigo managers, of like ages and kindred proclivities, used to club together. We might, on occasion, have a friend or two from some of the military stations, or from Calcutta; be joined, perhaps, by a native magnate, whose soul longed for the worship of Saint Hubert; or be accompanied by some distinguished traveller or honoured guest, whose sporting instincts led him to the society of brethren in arms, for we were all keenly infected with the hunting ardour, and in the pursuit of our royal game cared very little what trouble we took, or what expense we incurred.

In this way our little club had one year entertained the gifted, courtly, lamented Viceroy—the gentle, genial, accomplished, but ill-fated Earl Mayo. On the occasion to which my present story refers (and if I pursue my introductory descriptions much further, I am afraid your patience will be exhausted ere I begin to narrate the thrilling adventures that as yet lie in the background), our party consisted of, first:—Joe, or "Captain Joe," as we called him, for he knew every inch of country for miles round. He knew the habits, the calls, the hiding places, the very "taint in the air" of every denizen of the jungle, better than the best *shikarree* that ever followed a track or hunted up a *poonj* (*poonj* is a footmark), and besides being a dead shot, a clever planter, and a favourite with the ladies, he was the coolest hand in a crisis and the best captain of a hunt it has ever been my good fortune to come across.

Second on the list was his brother George. A merry twinkling eye, peering out from swelling, unctuous undulations of flesh; a moist, merry, rather pendulous lip; a fair rotund corporation; well-shaped calves, hands, and feet;

and a skin which showed, beneath its woman-like whiteness, the veins meandering about like the ruddy streaks of a sun-kissed apple, might have conveyed an impression to the most careless and casual observer, that George was a man who loved good cheer. Never was an impression more in consonance with actual fact. George was the "Soyer" of our party. Even now my mouth waters at the recollection of the stews, *ragoûts, entremets,* sauces, and wonderful combinations of delicious toothsomeness, that George's skill would evolve from his culinary consciousness. He was a born cook. But although fat, he was far from feeble. At putting the stone, throwing the hammer, smashing with his revolver a bottle bobbing on the current of a jungle creek near the tent, or any other athletic exercise requiring dexterity and skill, not one of us in the camp could equal or approach him. Of his adventures more anon.

Our third member was "Old Mac," a man of enormous strength and powerful frame, but whose grizzly locks and grey beard bore token of the severe training he had undergone when he had engaged to pull an oar against Oxford in the Cambridge winning eight of many years ago. Mac was a thorough good fellow. Clever, satirical, lazy till roused, eternally warming his ruby-tinted nose—a real Roman—with the jet black, greasy-looking bowl of a very small, much-mended little meerschaum pipe, he was yet passionately fond of shooting, and was the best snipe shot in camp. The little meerschaum was his "fetish." It was NEVER out of his mouth, not even, I verily believe, when he slept, and, indeed, I have often seen him indulge in an abstracted whiff between the intervals of soup, fish, joint, game, cheese and fruit.

Old "Butty," a six-footer (our district engineer), as well as part proprietor of a good factory; Pat Hudson—the blithest, brightest, merriest, wittiest, most loving-hearted, free-handed, reckless, careless, happy-go-lucky, blundering,

thundering Irishman that ever followed hounds or won a steeplechase (and there was no better rider then, perhaps, in all Hindostan), and myself, were the remaining members of our party.

We were a merry half dozen, and fairly typical of the good old school of Tirhoot planters; and, to begin my story once more—

This is how it was:—

We were camped on the bank of one of the swift-running milky streams I have referred to. There was a lovely moonlight, and a faint breeze was just stirring the feathery tops of the jungle grass and ruffling the glassy surface of the stream. The lamps were lit in the dining tent. The white-robed servants were flitting to and fro. Pat Hudson, in the pauses of conversation, was striking chords (if one may be said to strike anything out of a wheezy German concertina), and "Old Mac" lay back luxuriously in his easy chair, blowing a cloud from his eternal "cutty."

Says Pat, "I thought the brute was as unsteady as blazes to-day."

"No wonder," said Joe. "He is as *must* as can be, and I wonder he has done no mischief before now."

"You'd better have him tied up to-morrow, Pat," said George, "and you can put your *howdah* on the little *mukna*."

The conversation, of which this was a part, bore reference to a magnificent elephant that had been lent by a neighbour-Rajah to Pat. The animal was the finest, stateliest, most noble-looking beast in the whole camp. We had in all thirty-seven elephants, and they were picketed out, all round the camp, their huge bulk, swaying trunks and tails, and flapping ears, looking weird and uncanny in the pale clear flood of moonlight that suffused the scene.

It was indeed a strange sight, but to us a very commonplace one. All over the sandy circle (our camp was on a

little clear mound, hemmed in on all sides by the tall jungle grass, save where the river ran deep and swift in front) twinkled numerous fires, where the *syces* (grooms), *mahouts* (elephant drivers), beaters, water-carriers, domestic servants, and other camp followers, each cooked his evening *chattie* of rice or broiled his slice of venison—part of the spoils of the day's shooting—over the glowing embers. A huge *semul* or cotton tree, with buttressed trunk and gnarled branches, and a clump of solitary palms, were the only trees that broke the monotonous surface of the grassy plain for miles around. At some distance from the camp Pat's elephant—the *duntar* (*duntar* is a tusker)—was chained up to a strong peg, driven deep into the ground. He was watched by a strong guard of drivers and other natives, armed with spears, and the brute was exercising his ingenuity, or giving vent to some inward fit of spleen, by blowing heaps of sand and dirt over his head and body. Occasionally he would uplift his mighty trunk and emit a shrill, trumpeting, crashing scream; then he would seize a massive limb of a tree that lay beside his heap of fodder and smash the earth all around him with it.

It was evident the brute was excited, and an uneasy feeling seemed to pervade all the elephants, and extended its unseen, indescribable influence to every living being in camp.

From evidences, which the keen eyes of Joe and George had detected all during the day's "beat," there could be little doubt that the ponderous brute was getting into that dangerous state of uncontrollable passion and fierce savagery, which is the characteristic of the male elephant in the amatory season. At such a time—when, if still unsubjugated by man, and its natural wildness not yet tamed down by discipline, its instincts would lead it to pair off with the favourite female of the herd—the tame tusker develops a fierce uncontrollable irritability. His savage nature comes

to the surface. He becomes moody, sullen, and altogether untrustworthy—some, of course, more so than others—and this state of savage incertitude of temper the natives call *must.* A *must* elephant is always a dangerous brute. When *must,* they are generally secluded from all contact with other animals. Fastened in the *peil khanna,* or elephant shed, by massive chains round the ankles, even the careless *mahout* then becomes wary as he approaches the brooding, savage brute to give him his daily food, and all men and animals about the village give the sullen tusker a wide berth.

When he is coming into this state, the surest indication perhaps is a stream of thick, yellowish, viscid-looking humour, which exudes from a small orifice under the eye, no bigger, apparently, than a pin's head. His irritation and unsteady temper also shows itself by quick turnings round, short spasmodic little charges, an inclination to toss dirt and clods about, frequent trumpetings, disinclination for food, and a blind wreaking of seemingly uncontrollable rage, at the slightest impulse, on any object, animate or inanimate, that may come in his way.

The day had been intensely hot. Our "beat" had been over a big area of jungle. We had bagged two tigers, two buffaloes, and the usual number of pig, deer, florican, and other small game for the servants and our own kitchen requirements; and all day Pat's objurgations had been incessant, as the huge tusker had behaved in the strangest manner. Often rushing forward in front of the line; at times wheeling round and making a charge at the nearest elephant—keeping up all the while a rumbling sound like distant thunder; then trying to charge into a herd of tame cattle; and at times endeavouring to rid itself of the *howdah* by shaking itself like a huge water-dog after a bath. The *mahout* (driver) could scarcely keep the brute to his work, and it was evident that the *duntar* was becoming unsafe to ride.

When we got into camp, the *mahouts* had the greatest

difficulty in unharnessing the *howdah*, and the savage beast had already hurt one incautious grass-cutter, who had ventured too near, by a swinging blow with his powerful trunk, which had sent the unhappy *guddha ka butcha* (son of a donkey) flying headlong into a heap of thatching grass.

When Juggroo, his own *mahout*, had managed to secure him to the strong stake before mentioned, the thick, clanking, hobbling chains were fastened on him, and after pouring several big earthenware pots of water over his head, old *Shumsher* (the "flaming sword")—for such was the elephant's name—seemed to have become a little quieter.

We were all seated under the *shamiana*, in front of the dining tent. A *shamiana* is a sort of fringed canopy under which in India the dwellers in tents sit in the cool of the evening to sip their sherry, smoke their manillas, and talk over the events of the day. Our hunting togs had been discarded. We had all indulged in a bracing delicious bath in the cool swift river, and now, dressed in *pyjamas*, loose *banians*, slippers, and smoking-caps, we were waiting the announcement of dinner.

Pat had just evoked a more than ordinarily excruciating groan from the asthmatic concertina, when a sudden tumult arose around the outskirts of the tents. Shouts and cries broke upon the erstwhile subdued hum of the busy camp. Then arose a piercing scream, as of one in mortal terror and anguish, and from all parts of the camp arose the cry—"*Bhago, bhago, Sahiban — Duntar must hogea — Duntar khoolagea hy.*"

"Run, run, Sahibs—the Tusker has gone 'must' or mad. He has broken loose."

We all started to our feet. George had just gone down to the bank of the river to where the cooking was going on, which lay nearer the mad elephant's picket. By this time, the terror-stricken servants were flying in all directions. The huge brute, with infinite cunning, had all along been making

mighty efforts to wrench up the stake to which he was bound. This at last he had succeeded in doing. With the first desperate bound, or lurch forward, the heavy ankle chains, frayed and worn in one link, had snapped asunder; and with the huge stake trailing behind him, he charged down on the camp with a shrill trumpeting scream of maddened excitement and savage fury. The men with the spears waited not for the onset. One poor fellow, bending over his pot of rice, trying to blow the smouldering embers of his fire into a flame, was seized by the long flexible trunk of the infuriated brute, and had but time to utter the terrible death scream which had startled us, ere his head was smashed like an egg-shell on the powerful knee of the maddened monster. He next made a rush at the horses that, excited and frightened by the clamour around them, were straining at their ropes, and buried his long blunt tusks in the quivering flanks of one poor Caboolee horse that had struggled in vain to get free.

The other elephants, hastily loosened by the *mahouts*, were rushing in wild affright into the jungle, their sagacity well informing them of the danger of encountering a *must duntar* in his wild unreasoning rush of frenzied fury.

All this was the work of a moment. Poor George, who was bending over some stewpan, wherein was simmering some delicacy of his own concoction, was not aware of the suddenly altered aspect of affairs, till the huge towering bulk of the elephant was almost over him. Another instant, and he would have shared the fate of the hapless *mahout*, had he not, with admirable presence of mind, delivered the hissing hot stew, with quick dexterity and precision, full in the gaping mouth of the furious brute. His next sensation, however, was that of flying through the air, as the brute, with one swing of its mighty trunk, propelled him on his aerial flight, and he fell souse in the middle of the stream, with the saucepan still tightly clutched in his hand.

Our first impulse had been to rush for our guns. Alas! there was not a weapon in camp in a serviceable state. Our "bearers" had taken them all to pieces to clean, and had dropped them in affright, on the first wild outcry. "Old Mac," in his hurry to get out of the depths of his arm-chair, had tumbled it over and lay sprawling under it, and all had passed so rapidly, that before he could struggle to his feet the enormous brute was fairly on us. With a rush he made straight for the *shamiana*—the ropes snapped like burnt flax under his ponderous tread. The lacquered bamboo poles that supported the *shamiana* swayed and snapped like pipe stems, and with a swoop, like the wings of a monster swan, or rather like the collapsing bulk of a pricked balloon, the crimson-fringed canopy came crashing to the ground. We had all made our escape in separate directions. It was a regular stampede. *Sauve qui peut* was the order of the moment. We had no time to think of poor Mac's predicament. We stumbled over tent-ropes, dashed through the pendent "*cheeks*," or bamboo screens, not knowing but what, at any moment, the terrible trunk of the maddened giant might be curling round our waists.

One or two of us, myself among the number, plunged into the river and swam to a low brush-covered point, that jutted into the stream on the opposite bank, where George was already seated, rubbing his back with gruesome grimaces, and swearing in his most classic Hindostanee at all elephants in general, and *must* elephants in particular.

The *émeute* had been so sudden, the onset of the tusker so rapid, that we had no time for thought, much less for action; and totally unarmed as we all were, what could we have done to stay the furious charge of a mad infuriated animal of such colossal size and strength as a *must* elephant?

From all sides of the camp, in the long jungle grass, we could hear the affrighted servants chattering in fearsome accents, and calling out:

"*Bap re bap! Arree Bap re bap! Sahib murgea tha—hai! hai!*" "Oh, father! oh, my father! the Sahib is dead! alas! alas!"

And then we began to count our number, and think what had become of poor Mac. George, Joe, and myself were together. "Butty" and Hudson had fled like hares down the bank of the river, but where was Mac?

"Good Heavens! can he be over there?" said Joe.

Mindful of my early colonial experience, I coo'ee'd.

An answer came from Hudson down the river.

"Coo'ee," again, but no response from Mac.

"Mac, Mac, where are you?" we shouted.

No response; and a dull dead fear began to hug the hearts of us all. Over the river we could see the infernal brute, who had thus scattered us, in a perfect frenzy of rage; kneeling on the shapeless heap of cloth, furniture, poles, and ropes; and digging his tusks, with savage fury, into the hangings and canvas, in the very abandonment of mad uncontrollable rage. We had little doubt but that poor Mac lay crushed to death, smothered beneath the weight of the ponderous animal, or mangled out of all likeness to humanity by the terrible tusks that we could see flashing in the clear moonlight. It seemed an age, this agony of suspense. We held our breaths, and dared not look into each other's faces. Everything showed as clear as if it had been day. We saw the elephant tossing the strong canvas canopy about as a dog would worry a door-mat. Thrust after thrust was made by the tusks into the folds of cloth. Raising his huge trunk, the brute would scream in the very frenzy of his wrath, and at last, after what seemed an age to us, but which in reality was but a few minutes, he staggered to his feet (for all this time he had been kneeling), shook his massive bulk, looked fiercely and defiantly around, made as if he would have marched straight through the dining tent, where the snowy cloth glistened white under the tent-lamps, then, with a

parting shrill trumpeting scream of concentrated wrath and malice, some fresh idea seemed to enter his demented brain, and he rushed into the jungle.

An awful silence seemed to fall on the scene. No sound came from the deserted camp. The fires flickered fitfully, and their ruddy glow was reflected in the stream. Occasionally the plash of a falling bank, or the hissing-like *soof* of a porpoise surging slowly up stream, as he came to the surface to blow, broke the silence. All else was deathly still.

At length, with quite an audible sob, George uttered speech. "Poor old Mac!" was all he said, and our hearts felt like lead within us.

By this time, some of the servants were venturing forth into the open. The elephants had all disappeared in the hidden recesses of the jungle. Pat and "Butty" hailed us, and in silence we swam across. Here the evidences of the mad brute's frenzy were numerous. The strong folds of the *shamiana* were pierced in all directions. A shapeless mound of smashed furniture lay huddled in one corner, and calling the servants, we proceeded mournfully to unwind what we all felt sure was the shroud of our ill-fated comrade, "Poor old Mac!"

Just then a smothered groan struck like the peal of joy-bells on our anxious ears, and a muffled voice from beneath the folds of the *shamiana* in Mac's well-known tones growled out, "Look alive, you fellows, and get me out of this, or I'll be smothered!"

The rebound was too much for our overstrained feelings. George fairly blubbered out—

"O Mac, is that you?"

"Who the devil do you think it is?" came the response. We raised a cheer, set to work with a will, and soon extricated our composed friend from his unwelcome wrappings.

Then, indeed, could we see how narrow had been his escape, how imminent his peril.

In trying to get out of the way of the first rush of the elephant, his foot had caught in one of the tent ropes, and the whole falling canopy had then come bodily upon him, hurling the camp table and a few cane chairs over him. Under these he had lain, able to breathe, but not daring to stir, while the savage beast had behaved as has been described. His escape had been miraculous. The cloth had several times been pressed so close over his face as nearly to stifle him. The brute, in one of its savage, purposeless thrusts, had pierced the ground between his arm and his ribs, pinning his Afghan *choga* or dressing-gown deep into the earth; and he said he felt himself sinking into unconsciousness, what with tension of nerve and brain and semi-suffocation together, when the brute had happily got up and rushed off.

It was characteristic of Mac, that after he had swallowed a stiff brandy and soda, his first care was to search among the shattered *débris* of the wrecked *shamiana* for his beloved black pipe. Having, much to his satisfaction, found this tried friend, he relit it, got into a spare chair, and was soon again blowing his cloud, as if nothing unusual had happened.

In response to George's agitated utterance—

"Thank God, Mac, old man, it's no worse; but it was a narrow shave."

"TOO CLOSE TO BE PLEASANT!" was all he said.

We were not long in getting things rearranged. Our servants gradually made their appearance. Scouts were sent out after the elephants, and men posted all round the camp to report if the *must duntar* again put in an appearance. Dinner was served up, and soon we were all busy discussing the viands, and the narrow escape from a sudden and cruel death our trusty old comrade had just experienced.

CHAPTER II.

AT CLOSE QUARTERS WITH A TIGER.

Ryseree—A decaying village—Ravages of the river—Joe's yarn—The ruined shrine—"Sign" of tiger—The bamboo thicket—A foolhardy resolve—Tracking tiger on all fours—Inside the thicket—Inside the enclosure—Inside the temple—The bats—"Alone with a man-eater"—The tigress at bay—"Minutes that seem like hours"—Well done! good revolver—"Never again on foot"—Wild beast statistics from *The Saturday Review*.

"I FANCY, Mac," said Butty, "that was about the narrowest '*butch*' you ever had in your like." ("*Butch*" is from "*butchana*," to escape.)

"Never a closer," said Mac; "I thought it was all up with me once or twice."

"How did you feel?" I asked.

"Well, I can hardly tell you. Whenever I recognised that the brute was on me, I felt at once my only chance of safety was to lie perfectly still. Once or twice the oppression on my face from the pressure of the heavy canvas was almost suffocating, and when the huge tusk buried itself in the earth close to my side, I could scarcely refrain from calling out."

"It must have grazed your ribs?"

"It did. After that, I seemed to turn quite unconcerned. All sorts of funny ideas came trooping across my brain. I couldn't, for the life of me, help feeling cautiously about for my pipe, which had dropped somewhere near, when I tripped on the ropes. I seemed, too, to have a quick review of all the actions I had ever done, and was just dropping off into

a dreamy unconsciousness, after pulling a desperate race against Oxford with my old crew, when your voices roused me to sensation once more."

Said Joe, "Well, do you know, I have had the same sensations exactly, during one very narrow squeak I once had."

"Which one was that?" said George.

"Can't you remember the *buchao* (escape) I had in the Ryseree *mundil* (temple)?"

"Ah, yes! Tell them that. By Jove, that was a squeak, and no mistake!"

By this time our curiosity was all aflame, and there was a general cry of,

"Come on, Joe, let's have the yarn."

"*Tamaco lao!*" shouted Mac, that being equivalent in English to "Bring the tobacco!" and the white-robed old *bearer* appeared at the bidding; entering noiselessly from the outside gloom, as if a spectre, summoned by a cabalistic spell from the shadowy realms of spirit-land, had entered on the scene.

Another boy followed him, bearing the *Ag dan*, that is, a small brass or silver salver, containing pieces of glowing charcoal. Along with this fire-dish (they are often beautifully carved, and form a handsome ornament), the boy presented to each smoker a pair of "*chimtas*," or small silver tongs, with which the ruddy charcoal is lifted, and put into the bowl of the pipe; and while Mac was nearly burning his rubicund proboscis, in the attempt to ignite his strong moist tobacco, I may as well describe the *locale* of Joe's exciting adventure.

I knew Ryseree well. It was a straggling village, on the right bank of the main stream of the Koosee, and had once been a place of considerable importance. The encroachments of the stream had laid waste many of its once fertile rice fields. The magnificent tanks, which had been excavated

with such patient care, and at such a vast expenditure of labour by the villagers of some far-away remote time—so remote that even tradition failed to crystallise a single fact concerning them—were many of them now choked up with sand and matted growth of water-plants. Very few houses in the once populous and thriving town were now occupied. Tumble-down frameworks of rotting bamboos and mouldering thatch, festooned by rank luxuriant trailing creepers and wild gourds, lay scattered all round the open area, like an aggregation of big green ant-hills.

Round the environs of the dismantled village, white gnarled mango trees, denuded of bark and bare of leaves, stretched out their gaunt arms, as if beseeching pity for their forsaken greenery and stripped condition. The soil all around was dank and clammy and moist. Here and there a huge embankment of sand, with a mound of brushwood and matted *débris*, showed where the annual floods tore down from the "terai," sweeping everything before them in their devastating rush. A few foundations of solid plastered brickwork, with rudely fashioned posts, standing up alone, battered, charred, and slowly rotting, evidenced the forsaken site of some wealthy grain merchant's "*dukan*," or granary; but the only inhabitants now left in the village were a few humble cultivators of the cowherd and gardening castes, with two or three Brahmin and Rajpoot families; indigent, listless, fever-stricken, and subsisting entirely on the produce of their reduced herds, or the crops raised from a few patches of vetches, or rice, scattered at intervals among the tall encroaching jungle grass, which everywhere waved its rustling tops, and surrounded the ruined hamlet as with a belt of impenetrable, sapless, dun-coloured growth.

Such villages are common enough in these "*Dyaras*" or riverine plains, all over India. Many of the rivers that come thundering down into the plains from the Himalaya, to join the Ganges, shape for themselves a regular channel of gradual

indentation parallel to their course. If any of my readers will take the trouble to look at the map, they will see that, like the ribs of a fern leaf, rivers come running into the Ganges from both sides. Those on the north-east side, while their current takes a southerly course, yet eat into the plain from east to west; and in this way many of their tracks, if we may use that term, are often many miles in width. As the river gradually works its way along, it eats into the settled cultivated country on the one side, leaving behind it, on the other, a wasted wilderness of sand-banks, patches of black mould on which grows a luxuriant vegetation, deep creeks, shallow sand-bars and stagnant lagoons; in fact, the very intricate country which I have described as the haunt of the tiger, rhinoceros, and buffalo, the most worthless country for culture or settlement, but the finest country in the world for game and sport.

The once thriving village and fertile rice-fields of Ryseree had reached just about the culminating stage of this gradual destructive process. The rich oil and seed merchants, the sleek Brahmins, the gallant Rajpoots with their free tread, manly forms, and independent bearing, had grown tired of warring against continued floods and annual irruptions of the predatory Koosee, and had sought a settlement further away from the turbulent stream. The cattle-folds and granaries had crumbled down, and lapsed into jungle. The bamboo *topes* had tangled and twisted themselves into a dense matted impenetrable brake. The orchards of mangoes no longer bore a single leaf. The temples were mouldering to dust. One shrine, sacred to Khristna, was still occasionally visited by some very aged and infirm devotee, from some far-off village, whence he had come in his old age, to offer up a prayer and deposit a few flowers once more before he died, at the shrine where he had worshipped in his vigorous early manhood ere yet the terrible Koosee had swept away the glory of the village.

It was a dreary place. The village "collections" were always in arrear. The chief item in the annual revenue was the fee charged at so much per head, on the foreign cattle that were driven every year after the subsidence of the floods, to graze on the fat pasture that then sprung up on the deserted clearings, now almost unrecognisable from the original jungle. Great herds of these cattle were driven to this part of the Dyarah, as a favourite feeding ground, and, as a direct consequence, tigers were plentiful, and a "drive" through the Ryseree *ilaka*, or jurisdiction, was always regarded as a sure "find."

And now to let Joe tell his story.

We were all attention. Our pipes were "drawing" beautifully. The night was but young. There was little danger of "Shumsher" again putting in an appearance, and while the "*noker chakur*" (servants) cleared up the wreck of the "*shamiana*" outside, and put things generally to rights, Joe, with a loud a-hem, commenced.

"Ye know, boys, I'm no hand at spinning a yarn, and I would much rather George pitched it to ye. He could do it better than I can, and he was with me at the time."

"I remember the incident well," said George, "but I never poach."

"Blaze away, Joe, and you'll soon come to the end of it!"

"Well," said Joe, "it was a good many years ago now, when my old father was alive; and he would seldom allow us to have any of the factory elephants to go out after a tiger, unless he went with us himself. On this occasion, George and I had got the loan of a few 'beater' elephants, from the *dehaat* (surrounding country). It was the first time we had gone out by ourselves, and we were full of ardour and inexperience.

"We had beaten all over the *Basmattea tuppra* (*tuppra* is 'an island') round by Shikargunje and Burgamma, and had put up nothing but a few pig and hog-deer. It was an

intensely hot day. We kept firing the jungle as we went along, and about two in the afternoon we stopped near Pokureea *Ghat* (ferry) to have some *tiffin* (lunch).

"While munching our *dalpattees* (a kind of cake) and drinking some milk, which a polite *Bataneea* (cowherd) had presented to us, a man came over in the boat and told us that there was a *man-eating tiger* over at Ryseree. We sent over one of our own *peons* to fossick out more information, and he soon came back with a confirmation of the report, and in a very short time we had swum our elephants across, and were making for the supposed lair of the tiger as fast as we could go; and you know, Maori, what sort of a *dehaat* it is," said Joe, turning to me.

"Awful bad travelling," I assented; "I know the place."

"There was not much jungle about the village then," Joe continued, "and we beat every possible patch we could think of as a likely spot, but coming on no 'sign,' we began to think we had been hoaxed, and were inclined to give up further attempts for that day at least, in no very amiable mood.

"Close by one of the tanks—a small tank, with its surface so covered by a dense carpeting of weeds that an incautious elephant might even have been deceived, and have plunged in, thinking it was dry land—there grew a solitary *semul*, or cotton tree. All round it was a dense, matted, inextricably tangled, wild growth of bamboos, laced together with creepers and climbing plants, and through the close-clustered, clinging maze we could discern the grey, weather-stained, domed roof of a temple, with great cracks gaping in the masonry, and the iron trident on the top, twisted, bent, and rust-eaten, hanging down over part of the roof. Amid the clefts of the masonry a few sinuous creepers had effected a lodgment, especially one broad-leaved, shady *peepul* tree (the *ficus indicus*). The shade below was dark as the mouth of a cave, and the ground was moist and yielding, while the elephants

sank a foot deep into it every time we went near it. It was so matted and wet, the creepers clung and intertwined so closely and tenaciously together, that I never imagined it would hide a tiger, and, indeed, we would not have thought of beating through it, had not the *mahout* on George's elephant directed our attention to a few scratches on the bark of the tree, which, very excitedly, he affirmed to be the marks of a tiger's claws.

"We both laughed at the idea, for the marks were fully eleven feet off the ground, and we never imagined a tiger could reach up that height."

"I've seen marks higher up a tree than that," said Mac.

"So have I since," said Joe, "but at that time we were rather incredulous. However, I was determined to be satisfied, and, getting down, I commenced to crawl through the brake in order to get to the trunk of the tree. Very fortunately for me, as you will see in a minute, I took my pistol with me. It was that identical pistol," said the narrator, pointing to a handsome ivory-handled Thomas's patent lying on the table. "You know it, all of you. It carries a heavy bullet, with a good charge, and is no toy at close quarters, as my story will prove anon."

"Why did you get off the elephant?" said Butty. "That was surely a foolish thing to do."

"Ye don't catch this child doin' such griff-like tricks," said Pat.

"Well, I have learned more caution since," said Joe; "but the fact is, both George and I were afraid there might have been an *eenar* (well) about the place, with perhaps blocks of masonry, and, to tell the truth, I don't think any elephant could have forced his way through such a tangled clump."

"I remember, too," put in George, "that the edge of the tank was rotten, and the ground *panky* (stiff moist clay), and we were afraid of getting the elephants bogged,

let alone tumbling them down a well. Besides, we never for a moment dreamed we would come upon 'old stripes' there after having been all over the place, and got never a sign. Go on, Joe."

Joe continued:

"I got through to the tree with some difficulty, and there, sure enough, were the footprints of a large tiger, as distinct as any one might wish to see. The ground showed marks all over a space of several yards in circumference. The tiger had evidently been stretching itself up against the tree, and cleaning its nails on the bark. The scratchings on the bark were quite plain, and seemed of very recent date, as the white milky juice had scarcely yet dried on the tree.

"I narrowly scrutinised the whole surroundings. I could see at one portion where the huge brute must have slipped a little on the edge of the tank while drinking. The water was yet muddy where it had flowed into the track of the claws. It was hot, sultry, and still. The perspiration streamed from me. I called out to George that there were signs of tiger sure enough, and very fresh signs, too, but did not think the brute was now in the covert.

"'Are there any signs of a *kill?*' cried George.

"'I can't see any, but I'll have a look,' I answered; and then creeping on hands and knees, cutting away a twig here and a creeper there, I slowly made my way inwards, knife in hand, and my pistol ready in my belt. I penetrated yet farther and farther into the dark, noisome, gloomy tangle of matted undergrowth."

"But hang it all, man alive! was there a tiger inside?" burst forth Butty.

"Wait a bit, and you'll hear!" said Joe.

"Dry up, Wheels! Go on, Joe," said Pat.

Joe resumed his yarn.

"As I advanced farther and farther through the tortuous,

intricate path I was forcing for myself, the sounds of the elephants and talking of the men grew fainter and fainter. The shade, too, deepened, and grew gloomier; and full of bounding health and spirits as I was, I could not repress a sort of shudder as I crept deeper and deeper into the heart of the *banswarree* (bamboo brake).

"I could hear George crying out occasionally, and I answered as well as I could. After one response, I could have almost sworn I heard a rustling and stealthy creaking, as if some animal were forcing a way through the thicket in front of me. A cold, creepy sensation came over me, and for a moment I could hear my heart beat audibly. Still, I never for a moment thought there could be a tiger. Neither of us ever imagined a tiger would have gone into such a close place, without leaving plain traces of his presence. Besides, I had often heard strange stories of the *Ryseree ka Mundil* (the Ryseree Temple). The natives said it was haunted; that there was immense treasure hidden in it, and that all sorts of "*bhoots*" (ghosts) and spirits guarded the sacred deposit."

George chimed in, "Joe had often expressed a wish to explore this old temple, and it was that, I think, as much as anything, that led him to be so foolhardy."

"Well, but the tiger!" said Butty.

"Hold on, man," says Pat, "hurry no man's cattle, you might have a donkey of your own some day."

"Faith an' I'd never buy *you*, Pat, at any rate."

"Oh, shut up, you fellows"! growled old Mac. "Let's have the yarn."

"Well," continued Joe, "by this time I was in a pretty mess with sweat and mud and muck of all sorts; but I was now well through the encircling brake, and close up to the mouldering wall of the old temple. Heaps of broken sculptured masonry lay scattered about. The wooden framework of a door in the wall, hung ajar, dropping noiselessly into

dust. The shade and shelter were so complete, that not even a breath of wind could penetrate inside, to cause the trembling moth-eaten timber to stir. A ruined low wall, its coping all displaced, and great ugly chasms in its continuity, surrounded a circumscribed courtyard, literally choked with rank vegetation. Bushes started from every crevice and every crack in the mossy flag-stones. A greenish fungus-like growth covered all the masonry, and the smell was sickly, oppressive, and suggestive of rottenness. Everything spoke of ruin and decay and desolation—but desolate and dreary as the spot appeared, it wanted not inhabitants. As I shook from myself the dank leaves and withered twigs, and once more stood erect, a skulking jackal slouched over the crumbling wall, on the other side of the enclosure; an odious, repulsive-looking *Säp go* (a species of iguana) slithered noiselessly through a gap among the ruins; and numerous large-eared bats came flapping swiftly round me, and with an eerie, uncanny swoop and ghost-like swish, disappeared in the gloom."

"Ugh," said Butty, with a shudder, "it must have been a lively sort of a place? Eh, Joe?"

"Lively?" said Joe. "I tell you I never felt so uncomfortable in my life. I'm not superstitious, as you know, and I don't think I'm much of a *funk stick* either; but I'll never forget how I felt just then, nor how earnestly I wished I was well out of the infernal hole I had got into.

"A few cracked and crumbling steps, slippery with slimy mould and festooned across with spiders' webs, led up to the low frowning archway. I could yet see the little chiselled gutter, with a stone spout, that carried away the milk, poured as a libation to the grim idol—perhaps the blood of human sacrifices, who knows?—formerly offered to the deity whose ruined shrine I was now surveying. Having come so far, I determined I would complete my exploration thoroughly. The temple was one of those ordinary triple-domed

affairs you see so constantly in all these ruined Koosee villages. There is first a sort of antechamber, access to which is got through a low-browed door. Inside is a central square chamber, right under the biggest dome, with a black stone, placed in an oval on the floor, and a gutter round it, to let the blood, or oil, or milk, which are used as offerings, run away from this sacrificial stone or altar, and in the further recess, on a sort of pedestal, in an alcove, generally stood the idol.

"I peered into the temple. A few straggling fitful gleams of subdued light struggled through here and there a fissure in the rugged, massive walls; but they only served as a foil to the Cimmerian gloom which enshrouded the whole interior. The roof was high, vaulted, and reverberating. I could hear the swish of the horrid bats as they circled round and round the interior of the dome. The air seemed alive with whisperings. It was only the noise of the bat wings, but it sounded very ghost-like and fearsome. One would occasionally swoop almost in my face, causing me to start back involuntarily. As my eyes became a little more accustomed to the gloom, I could see the sinuous roots of the fig-tree that was silently but surely piercing every crevice, insinuating itself into every crack and cranny, and more certainly and swiftly than the destroying hand of time itself, was hastening onward the inevitable dissolution of the strong, massive, mysterious structure, that had been built perhaps when the Druids chanted their wild songs round the weird circle of Stonehenge."

"Bravo, Joe! You're getting quite poetical!" This from Butty, who was quietly replenishing his pipe.

"Oh, do shut up!" snorted Mac. "Let him finish his yarn. He's coming to the pith of the story now."

"These roots, in some places," continued Joe, who was evidently warming to his tale as the vivid recollection of the scene came back to him, "looked like huge coiling snakes as

they twisted about the fractured walls and roof. But the gloom and shade were so intense, I could not discern anything clearly inside the temple. At the far end, beyond the indistinctly shaped arches and buttressed projections, I could see something shining like a jewel through the gloom. It sparkled and shone just like a brilliant in a setting of jet; and not doubting but that it might be some tinsel round the mouldering fane in the hidden recess, or perhaps might even be a real jewel, for such a thing was not at all unlikely, I withdrew my head, and shouted out as loud as I could to George, to send a fellow in with matches, that I might thoroughly explore the gloomy interior of the murky ruin.

"I fancied then again, as the echo of my own shout lingered round the ruin, that a sharp sibilant sound came from the dark interior. It sounded like the 'fuff-fuff' of an angry cat; but imagining it to be only the hiss of a snake, or perhaps some sound made by the bats, I took no further notice of it.

"From George's responsive shout, I made out that he was hastening to join me himself; and I could, after a short pause, hear him forcing his elephant into the bamboos; but after a struggle, he seemed to find the task an impossibility, and retired.

"Again I called to him, and again I thought I heard the puffing, hissing sort of a sound inside.

"By-and-bye, I could hear George laboriously making his way through the brake, following the track I had made, and swearing awfully at the prickly, spiky barrier of twigs and creepers that impeded his progress.

"He took such a time that I got impatient. I turned again, and peered into the dim chamber. I was startled. Far back in the cavern-like gloomy arch, glittered two lustrous orbs of a baleful greenish hue. Their intensity seemed to wax and wane, as does the sparkle of a diamond as the light strikes on its facets. I was struck dumb with

astonishment for the minute. I could hear George rustling noisily through the last opposing barrier of twigs that separated him from me; my curiosity was now quite aflame. Strange, I felt no compunctious visitings of fear. The presence of my brother seemed to nerve me. The oppressive feeling of solitariness and sense of some impending danger seemed to have left me.

"The glittering light of the two blazing jewels seemed to expand and scintillate, and emit a yet more intense lustre. With a cry to George, 'Come on, George!' I stooped down and entered the close, stifling atmosphere:—the darkness seemed to swallow me up. I strode forth; the bats surged round my head, brushing me with their wings in wild affright. I was directly under the dome. My hands were extended in front of me like a blind man groping in an unknown place, when—with a roar that seemed to shake the very walls and reverberated through the vaulted apartment, the jewels blazed like a lurid gleam of fire; a quick convulsive spasm seized my heart as if a giant hand had clutched it and squeezed it like a sponge, and I knew at once that I was face to face, cooped up in this loathsome kennel, caught in a deadly trap, ALONE WITH A MAN-EATING TIGER!

"At such a time, one does not take long to think. 'Twas then the vista of my life appeared before my mental vision. 'Twas then a similar experience as Mac's, when he was like to be crushed by that brute of an elephant, flashed across my brain. Every incident of my life came trooping back to memory, quick and distinct as the lightning flash lights up every leaf and dripping twig and falling rain-drop in a thunderstorm on a summer's night.

"My next act was purely instinctive. I realised, rather than thought or felt, that the brute had been crouching back in the chamber expecting to remain undiscovered. I had an instinctive perception that it was a cur, that it would have

rather remained hidden than fought. It was probably gorged after a heavy repast. It must have been a coward, but my bold unceremonious entry must have been construed into an attack. It had no escape, and, rendered fierce by desperation, it was now springing upon me. As I say, all this flashed swift as thought over my intelligence. It took not an instant of time. But in that instant I grasped all the circumstances of the case. I realised my danger, and quick as thought I threw myself flat on my face. The echoing reverberations of that terrible roar yet deafened me. I knew there was a ringing sound in my ears. A huge body swept over me with a terrific rush. In the confused jumble of sound and conflicting emotions, I heard George's shout of dismay and terror. I seemed to dart forward, and for a minute I breathed again. In my mechanical instinct I *had* darted forward. I was now behind the pillar which supported the arch of the inner shrine. The man-eater was rushing round the central chamber, lashing his sides with his tail, and growling and roaring, but evidently in as great a funk as either George or myself.

"George was shouting like the devil outside, not knowing really what to do, and the tigress, for such she proved to be, was such an arrant cur that she was afraid to face him.

"Here, however, was your humble servant in as pretty a mess as you can well imagine."

"Sweet Father! I think so," said Pat.

"A devil of a fix," said Mac.

"By Jove," was all I could think of saying, while we all hung breathless on Joe's every sentence.

"Well, boys, to make a long story short," said Joe, "I got off safe and sound, and we killed the tiger between us."

"How was that?" we all queried.

"This is what I did," continued our captain. "As you remember, I had my pistol. I was in a dreadful funk as you may imagine, but desperation gave me a certain

nerve; and I knew that a movement or a whisper would probably bring down the fierce brute on me; and cooped up as I was in a mere den, what chance could I have against a real live tiger? By stretching out my hand, I could at any moment have touched the brute. She seemed to have forgot my existence quite, and after a few fierce boundings round the central chamber, she was now lying crouched down, peering eagerly out at the portal where George was yelling like a fiend to the *mahouts* and *peons* to come to him. Her head was between me and what little light there was. Slowly I raised the pistol. At the click of the hammer, faint as it was, she gave an ominous growl and turned her head.

"Now or never was the time.

"A flash that lighted up the gloom!!

"Again!

"Again!!

"Yet again!!!

"The arched temple once more resounded with reverberating echoes; but no roar this time from the tigress.

"She was stone dead.

"The first bullet had gone clean into the brain.

"And now, boys," said Joe, as he reached out his hand for the soda water and brandy bottle, "that's my yarn, and I don't want ever again to meet a *janwar* of that sort, under anything like similar circumstances"—(*janwar* means an animal).

Of course then the conversation turned on the feelings of both Joe and George during the quick but exciting succession of incidents. Various comments were made. We congratulated Joe on his good aim and lucky escape; and George told us of how they had taken home the tigress, having had to literally cut a passage out into the open, to let them remove the body.

The tigress killed by Joe under such memorable circum-

stances was an old mangy brute, almost toothless, lank, lean, and almost without a shred of hair. She measured eight feet four inches, and must have been a cowardly, timorous brute. Still it was a most foolhardy thing of any one to venture on foot into a thick jungle of the description above stated, when there were signs of tiger about.

Joe told me afterwards that he must have been several times quite close to the tigress as he forced his way through the jungle. At any moment she could have killed him with one blow of her powerful paw, and in his after career, during his residence in the Koosee jungles, during which time he witnessed the death of over three hundred tigers, scores of them falling to his own gun, Joe was never known to move far from his line of elephants on foot, if tiger's foot-prints were to be seen in the vicinity.*

* Lest the "intelligent sceptic" may be startled at the record of Joe's success as a tiger slayer, I append the following extract from the *Saturday Review* of January 15, 1887:—

"Such reading as the annual report sent home by the Government of India on the destruction caused by venomous snakes and noxious wild beasts, together with the measures taken for their extermination, forcibly reminds us of the primary functions of Government in the Indian Empire. The unremitting campaign waged against these pests is only a minor instance of the large share of attention which the Administration is obliged to devote to defending an inert population against the most immediate dangers to life and property. But it will serve its purpose as well as more conspicuous illustrations to show how continuously the efforts of Government must be exerted in this direction, and how impossible it is to implant and foster Western habits of self-reliance and energy in the races of the Indian Peninsula. Their traditional helplessness is brought into rather startling relief by an examination of the official returns before us. We find, for instance, that no less than 644 deaths are reported as due to jackals alone in the Bombay Presidency, Bengal, and the North-west Provinces. The Indian jackal is by no means a formidable beast, although it can fight in an ugly way when driven into a corner. Jackals, it is true, will occasionally attack a chance wanderer by night. But a mere show of determined defence is generally enough to keep them from coming to close quarters with an adult; and these figures are certainly higher than could be reasonably expected. A perusal of this report, moreover, is equally calculated to astonish and enlighten people who have a vague idea of the mischief done by snakes and wild beasts in India as to the serious extent

The moon was now declining red and threatening through the rising mists, so finishing each his "peg," we called to our "bearers," retired to our camp beds, and were soon dreaming

---

of their destructiveness. The loss of human life is striking enough, but the depredations amongst cattle, which are often the Indian peasant's only source of subsistence and well-being, must not be left out of sight. The measures of protection under a system of Government encouragement and reward, do not, on the contrary, make very much progress, if we are to judge from the report under consideration. Indeed, the death list rose from 22,425 persons in the previous year to 22,907 in the last twelve months. In estimating these figures, however, we must bear in mind the tendency of Indian statistics, as common as it is illusory, for any given returns to swell in proportion as improvements are effected in the reporting agencies. This feature is certainly illustrated by the figures before us. In one province the police were instructed for the first time last year to report the loss amongst cattle, together with the ordinary vital statistics which they are charged to collect, instead of sending in the information at separate times. The result of this consolidation of their duties was that something like a third more cattle were returned as destroyed, although the Local Government remarks that there is 'no reason to suppose that there had been any increase in the actual number of deaths.' At the same time it is acknowledged that even these figures are below the truth. 'Many of the largest grazing-grounds upon which tigers and leopards do most mischief are situated miles away from any police station, and the graziers do not, during the grazing months, often leave the jungle for the town or village where there is a reporting station.'

"We may take it, however, that, although the statistics relating to cattle are admittedly imperfect, the returns affecting human life are approximately correct, and represent fairly enough the annual mortality attributable to snakes and wild beasts. The death list has averaged over 22,500 for the last four years. As usual, the provinces which principally suffered were Bengal, the North-West Provinces, and Oudh. Together they contribute nearly two-thirds of the roll. Venomous snakes, of course, are far the deadliest enemies of human life. Out of the total number of deaths they caused 20,142, leaving 2,675 to be ascribed to wild beasts. No information is given as to the part played by the different varieties, but the cobra is always the most destructive, and few things bring home more vividly to Mr. Griffin the fatalism and apathy of the natives than their remissness in clearing out buildings or localities notoriously swarming with these creatures. Amongst wild beasts the tiger occupies, as usual, a bad pre-eminence; and, although he is more difficult for the sportsman to get at every year, there is no practical abatement in his destructiveness. Certain spots which are isolated by malaria and want of communications are as much his undisputed haunts still as those 'beats'

the dreams of the ardent Indian sportsman, while silence hovered over the snowy whiteness of our tents.

---

in the Central Provinces along the great salt line that stretched across India before the days of the Stracheys, where the tigers discharged the duties of the patrol, and the hardiest native smuggler would not dare to run his pack. 'Alligators, crocodiles and sharks' are again credited with 251 deaths in the three provinces mentioned above, though it cannot be said that in this enumeration the Government of India errs on the side of too accurate a classification. The alligator proper is, in fact, only found in the New World, while the various Indian crocodiles differ in some important respects from the true crocodile of Africa. It is, we believe, the 'mugger,' or marsh crocodile, which generally comes in for the loose designation of alligator, and this beast reaches an enormous size.

"As we have stated above, the returns of the destruction of cattle are very far from being exact. Last year, however, has the proud distinction of showing the heaviest loss that has yet been officially reported. The total number of domestic cattle killed ran up to nearly 60,000 head. Snakes are not held responsible for much of this loss, only 2,000 cases being put down to snake-bite; while the chief agents in the slaughter are tigers and leopards, each claiming considerably over 20,000 victims. To turn now to measures of reprisal, we find that 1,835 tigers, 1,874 bears, and 6,278 wolves were killed off last year, as compared with 2,196, 2,000, and 6,706 respectively in the preceding twelve months, in which the figures, for some unexplained reason, rose considerably above the average. This bag need not make the sportsman in quest of big game lose heart, provided he has at his disposal those three coveted requisites—time, health, and money. The extermination of snakes depends very much upon the character of the season, which does not appear to have been particularly favourable last year. Nevertheless, the number destroyed did not fall below the average, which has ranged for some time between 300,000 and 400,000; and of course this is far from being accurate, and is probably very much below the mark. The Government grants bestowed for these protective measures came to the tolerable sum of Rs. 2, 21,126."

CHAPTER III.

A NOCTURNAL ADVENTURE.

Out for *Khubber*—A clean shot—The *Loha sarung*, or sarus crane—A strange place for a live fish—Wealth of game—A varied bag—My yarn—Leopards superior to the tiger in daring and ferocity—Partiality to a diet of dogs—A seed harvest camp—Leopards close by—A sultry night under canvas—Dozing off—Is it nightmare?—A terrible awaking—Eye to eye—A perilous interviewer—The fatal shot.

HUDSON and self were up early next morning, long before the others were awake, and hastily quaffing a cup of tea brought by the ever watchful bearer, we mounted a small pad elephant which was in readiness, and sallied forth to see if we could get news of tiger, or find out what had become of the "*Duntar*."

We found that the infuriated brute had luckily not gone near any village; and I may as well here state that during the day he was secured, by the aid of several male elephants, and hobbled so firmly to a strong post near one of the villages, that he was rendered incapable of further mischief during the continuance of his fit.

Jogging along, with our guns over our knees, we talked of various things; I noting keenly the appearances of the jungle, and often exchanging interrogatories with the *mahout* or driver. As we neared a great branching skeleton of a withered cotton tree, the keen eye of my friend spied high up in the forked branches an accumulation of twigs, grass, sticks and feathers. Thinking it might be a vulture's nest, and being desirous of procuring some of the eggs for a

collector who had asked me to try and get him a few if possible, we moved round the tree to have a better view.

Suddenly Pat touched my arm, saying excitedly, "Look there, Maori—there's a head in the nest—what is it?"

I looked up to where he pointed, and there sure enough, peering over the edge of the nest at us, we could discern a piercing eye watching with the utmost intentness our every movement. The eye belonged to a head with a high bald-looking crown, in company with a strong projecting beak having broad duck-like mandibles.

"Hold on," I said to the mahout.

"*Dhut!*" This to the elephant in guttural Hindostanee. "*Dhut*" is the order in mahout language for the elephant to stand perfectly still.

The sagacious brute was immediately as still as stone. "It is a *Loha sarung,*" I whispered to Pat.

I had ball cartridge in my gun—I took steady aim at the motionless head. My bullet entered at the base of the skull and went clean through at the other side. On after examination we found it had carried the brain clean away, leaving the empty skull. There was scarcely a movement in the loosely piled mass of material composing the nest. The head sunk quietly out of sight. I was certain I had made a hit, but Pat began "chaffing" me.

"Why, man, you've missed."

Just then a few drops of blood began to drip slowly down, striking heavily on a projecting branch, and then a tiny crimson stream began to trickle down the tree, a mute evidence of the accuracy of my aim.

All was so perfectly still in the nest above that we could scarcely credit the evidence of our senses, but sending the mahout up the tree, he pulled out the unfortunate *Loha sarung,* stone dead, and informed us that there were two young ones in the nest.

These we quickly had handed down to us. As the mahout

was doing so, he held them by the legs, their heads hanging downwards. One consequence of this sudden reversion of their ordinary posture was to cause them to eject each about eight or ten small fish, which must have been swallowed whole, and they came tumbling right on Pat's head. Here let me state a fact. It may interest some of my readers with a taste for natural history, and is a curious illustration of the tenacity of life possessed by some fish. One of the fish so unceremoniously ejected from the crop of the young *Loha sarung* was actually *alive*. It was a small *ghurai*, a species of river fish akin in habit and appearance somewhat to the gudgeon. It is purely a bottom fish, has a round bullet-like head, has the voracity of a pike, the vitality of an eel, and its colour assimilates with the mud in which it delights to grope about for food.

The *Loha sarung*, although purely a wading bird, and subsisting entirely on fish diet, is yet powerful on the wing and is rather a scarce animal. I fancy it is a species of tree crane, but I am not sufficiently posted up in Natural History to give its correct appellation. It stands about four feet in height, is of a creamy-slate colour on the back and wings, with a tint of lavender underneath. It has a long neck not unlike that of a swan, which is of an intense vivid blue. The feathers closely set, and overlapping like the scales on a fish. The irridescent hues are very beautiful. Had I known the poor brute was sitting on young, I would not have shot it. The young ones were of the size of a half-grown goose, with the peculiar dingy yellow covering characteristic of the very adolescent gosling. The beautiful band of blue on the neck had not yet appeared on them. The neck was simply a dingier greyish yellow than the rest of the body. We tried to keep them alive. They took the fish we procured for them readily enough, but only lived for a few days after their capture.

With the poor dead bird hanging to the "pad," the limp

wings flapping funereally, we proceeded farther along the river bank. In these grandly stocked reserves, the *Koosee Dyaras*, or plains, if one goes out in this aimless sort of a way, only intent on shooting what he *sees*, his pad will often present a very curious, miscellaneous collection by the time he again reaches camp. Pat was not a "new chum," or "griff," as our Indian cousins would rather say, but I had not long been in Bhaugulpore, and I fairly revelled in the shooting, which is so much superior here to what it is in the more settled districts of Tirhoot and Behar generally. We consequently blazed away at everything that got up.

To give you some idea of the sort of sport one may have on such an excursion as I am describing, let me barely enumerate the "bag" we twain made that morning. Before we got back to camp, our pad was like a poulterer's shop. Besides the *Loha sarung*, we shot a florican, a Brahminy duck, a wild goose, a brace of *lalseer*, or red-tufted mallard, several pintails, grey duck, and teal. All these, except the florican, we got by stalking silently through the long grass by the river's brink. We also shot two or three sandpipers, goggle-eyed plover, two beef-steak birds, or black ibis, and a couple of curlew. Pat knocked over a brace of snipe near one of the tanks, while I bagged a blue fowl, two grey partridges, a brace of hares, and two green pigeons, which we got in a small mango grove near a ruined village. So much for small game: Besides these we saw and could have shot numerous hog-deer, wild pig, otters, a tiger cat, a porcupine, innumerable crocodiles, and aquatic birds in endless variety and diversity.

Nor are these the only denizens of the dense brakes and populous sand banks and waters. At any moment a tiger, a herd of wild buffalo, a hyæna, or wolf, may get up before the elephant, while a rhinoceros is not by any means a rarity. There are few snakes in these jungles. The big brown water snake and the harmless *hurrechara*, a dainty, delicate-looking

little reptile, are numerous enough, and the *Dhamin*, or grass snake, is not seldom seen; but the deadly cobra, the fatal *Sankur*, and the venomous *Kerait* keep more to the forest country and resort to the villages where rats, mice, poultry, frogs, and other such small deer most do congregate. Occasionally one may come across a python in these riverine plains, and I once shot one in the very place I have been describing, which on examination presented a very curious and uncommon illustration of the evil effects of greed and gluttony.

It had killed and must have swallowed *whole* a pretty big ravine deer. I found the horns of the deer had worked their way through the stomach of the enormous reptile, causing an ugly, most offensive, gangrenous sore, which rendered the skin perfectly useless as a specimen. The python, though swollen and enormously thick, only measured 13 feet in length. I have seen one killed at Peeprah, which measured 18 feet in length, and instances are recorded of even greater lengths than this.

Reverting to Joe's yarn of the preceding night, Pat asked me if I had ever experieneed an encounter at such close quarters with any tiger or large animal. This brought the conversation back to the lordly *felidæ*, and led me to relate a nocturnal adventure which had happened to me not long before, when I had been out in the forest country. And thus ran my yarn :—

"A NOCTURNAL VISITOR.

"'It was a dream, a horrid dream.'

"It is not generally known that leopards, though inferior in size and strength to the 'jungle king,' the Royal Bengal Tiger, is yet his superior in courage and ferocity. Tigers generally prefer the long grass jungles that fringe the deep silent rivers of India, but the leopard loves the woods and forests, and not unfrequently makes his lair on a platform of

tangled brushwood and intermatted creepers. I have shot them in places like this, at an elevation of over ten feet from the ground.

"They frequently haunt the vicinity of villages, and become bold robbers, carrying off the goats of the villagers, and eagerly snapping up a stray dog if he be unwary or unlucky enough to leave the precincts of the village pallisade. In the *Sal* jungles of Oudh, and among the cowherd and charcoal burners' villages along the Nepaulese frontier, many children are annually carried away by these beautiful spotted marauders. They usually prey on the *chikara* or four-horned antelope, but black buck, spotted deer, and even wild hog will be captured at a pinch, and dogs and calves furnish them with many a savoury meal. My brother Tom, a tea-planter, writing from Ambooteah, Kurseong, Darjeeling, under date 14th May, 1887, says—and I quote it here to illustrate the trait I am referring to: 'One of my *Syces* killed a pretty big leopard the other day with his *kookree*. He was cutting grass, and it came upon him with a roar—all of a sudden. He had some puppy dogs with him, and it was them the leopard was after. I fancy they are awfully fond of dogs. A leopard took one of my dogs out of a cane chair in the Tukdah verandah one night,' and so on—but to my yarn.

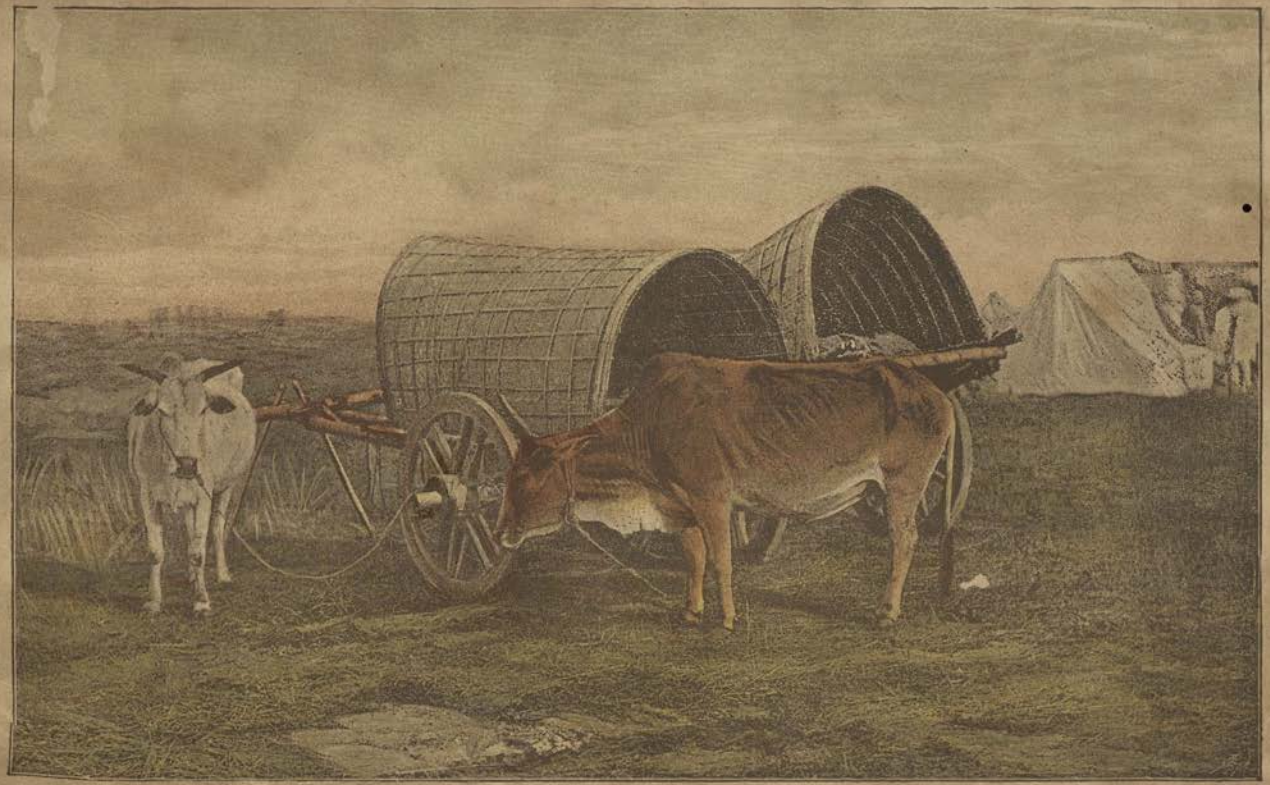
"In May, 1874, I was encamped near a picturesque village in North Bhaugulpore, bordering on the gloomy *Terai* forests, and my men had reported to me that two leopards haunted the jungle close by. My tents were pitched on the high bank of a beautiful tank, which had been excavated in long remote ages by the first fathers of the hamlet, and whose stored-up treasury of the precious fluid proved a welcome blessing to the parched rice fields in seasons of drought.

"All day the camp had presented a busy scene. Group after group of sturdy villagers had filed through the tent, taking advances for the coming manufacturing season; for

the indigo was now waving high, and it was time to engage carts and cutters, ploughs for the factory lands, and loaders and beaters for the vats. Some had balances to receive, others had vexed accounts to clear up. Some wanted loans on the security of bullocks or cattle, wherewith to purchase seed or agricultural implements. My native writers had been busy with their reed pens, and squatted on the ground, rocked their bodies backwards and forwards, as they drowsily intoned the particulars of voluminous accounts to the village *putwarrie* or accountant, who, in turn, elucidated the mysteries of each man's *hisab* to the gaping villagers outside, underneath the tamarind trees.

"The day had been intensely hot. All the long forenoon, a fierce west wind, laden with burning particles of dust, had been blowing; and the afternoon was close, still, terribly hot. The hand *punkah*, in the tent, waved by a sleepy, perspiring *punkah wallah*, disturbed the air, but gave no relief, for the air felt like the hot blast of a furnace. At length, the welcome evening breeze began to faintly sigh amongst the bamboo leaves. My domestic servants, who had been sleeping all day beneath the shadow of the great fig-tree near the tank, began to rouse up. The *syces* or grooms, came round with their buckets for the evening allowance of *gram* for the horses. The dog-keeper let loose the dogs, who came rushing boisterously into the tent, scattering the papers of the *putwarries*; and the dusky slaves of the pen bundled up their dingy unsavoury papers and parchments, and with a lowly salaam shuffled on their clumsy shoes that had been baking outside in the sun all day, and left the camp, to cook their curry and rice in the village.

"The *gomastah* or head man came up with his report to tell me of the prospects of the crops, the men who had carts, who would engage on the morrow, and generally to give me all the news of the different parts of the cultivation under his charge.



Vincent Brooks, Day & Son. Lith.

Bullock hackries or native carts.

"Among other items of information, Debnarain Singh, such was his name, told me that the leopards (for there were marks of two) had destroyed a fine calf right in the village the previous night, and that they were becoming a regular pest to the poor *ryots*. I determined on looking them up next day, and told Debnarain to arrange for beaters, tomtoms, and fireworks. With these I hoped to oust the spotted vixens from their lair; and from my position on a *mychan*, or elevated platform of branches, get a shot at their bright and glossy hides.

"After a dinner of peafowl and curry, washed down with artificially cooled and ever-welcome Bass, I was glad to throw myself down in my camp bed, and read the paper which the *dak* runner or postman had just brought in from the post-station some ten miles distant. We retire early in India during the hot weather, or when alone in camp, for the morning is the coolest and most enjoyable part of the day, and we are up long before the sun shows his lurid blood-red disc above the coppery horizon.

"For the sake of coolness, the *khanats*, or side walls of the tent, had all been removed. The breeze had died away, and the night was still and oppressively hot. From the village came the distant hum of the villagers and camp followers gossiping after their evening meal. My dogs lay around panting with outstretched tongues. A faint sound of some distant musician, drearily drumming his melancholy and monotonous tomtom (or native hand-drum); the howl of some village cur, the *tweet-tweet* of a belated *minah* (or Indian starling), or occasional horrid din of the screech-owl as her harsh grating cry awakened the echoes, were the only sounds to break the stillness. Far in the forest might at times be heard the howl of a wolf or the bark of a hog deer; but gradually sound after sound faded away and stillness reigned.

"Near at hand, a most unearthly yell, which seems the despairing cry of some midnight demon, startles the deathly

silence. The awful howl is caught up and repeated from every quarter, till the whole forest seems peopled with howling demons, and Acheron itself seems broken loose. This sets the dogs ageing. The terriers bark furiously. The retrievers whine and yelp. The two kangaroo hounds bay out a loud wail, and the servants raise their heads and utter angry imprecations. "Down, Dandy. Chup rao Moscow;" and the sounds again die away. It is only the jackals, and nobody minds them, although they might carry off one's boots and rifle the cooking tent, if the dogs did not keep watch and ward.

"At length all the camp is hushed in slumber. For a long time I lay awake thinking. It is too hot to sleep. The horses stamp and move about restlessly. Old 'Typo,' my noble hound, is asleep, and dreaming in his sleep of some cunning, dodging old jackal. He utters short excited yelps. He is no doubt dreaming of a rare hunt.

"My mind reverts to my old College days—the dear old quadrangle where oft I have paced to and fro with loved comrades scattered far and wide. Farther back wanders the busy memory. I see the old village church with its background of crimson heather and golden whin. The mossy boulders on the hill, beside which the moorcock plumed his glossy brown crest, and the grouse strutted proudly among the bracken. I see the brown waters of Effoch dancing noisily down the steep glen, and the glinting of the yellow burn trout as he loups behind yon hoary moss-covered boulder. Here comes Tam Ross, the shepherd, round the peat stack, with his dogs frisking about him, and far away up the brae a few sharp reports, the puffs of smoke lazily curling upwards, tell me 'the shooters' are out for the day.

"I am asleep at last. But it is so hot. I am not sleeping easily. It is a troubled repose. I have occasional waking moments. The flickering oil lamp in the corner of the tent

seems to trouble me and keep me awake. All is still. Not a breath of air stirs.

"Suddenly I am awake, wide awake, although my eyes still remain closed; but a nameless terror ties me down to the bed. A horrible fascination seems to keep me spell-bound. I have a terrible weight of some dreadful horror on me. My limbs are tied. I cannot move. I would give worlds to cry out—to move a limb; but my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth, and my body is as rigid as iron. I am possessed with an awful fear. I know some terrible impending danger confronts me. All this flashed through my mind. It must have been instantaneous. And yet I *was* in danger, real ghastly danger. I opened my eyes! The oil lamp had gone out, but through the open walls of the tent a bright moon shone. It was almost as clear as noon, and there, right in the centre of the tent, within two feet of my face, stood a large full-grown leopard. It was a magnificent animal. There was no sound save a subdued snore from some sleeping tenant. How the brute had crept in among the sleeping dogs and servants I never could divine. Hunger could not have been her motive. She stood silently in the middle of the tent. Her keen eye glared right in mine. Her supple lissome tail waved slowly from side to side, with a short spasmodic twitch at the extreme tip, as you may have seen a cat's do, when lying on the grass watching a bird. I could almost feel the brute's breath upon my face. I was, as you can imagine, in 'a mortal funk.' At any moment the brute might spring upon me. As I gazed, the eyes seemed to contract and expand, and as I made an involuntary movement, the fierce animal retracted her lips, disclosing to my view the formidable fangs. How long I lay thus I do not know. The leopard never stirred a step. There she stood intently glaring into my strained eyes. At length to my intense relief she turned slowly round. My agony of suspense was becoming intolerable. With a glance behind, which

seemed plainly to say, 'lie still,' she bounded lightly over the prostrate form of a coolie lying huddled in his white cloth, and made leisurely off. Then with a yell in which all my pent-up breath found vent, I roused the sleepers, and fired two rapid shots with my handy revolver, one of which I fancied took effect. Dogs barked. Servants cried out. I rushed for my gun, and just then the leopard turned round and surveyed the agitated and alarmed camp.

"She stood out clear and distinct in the pearly moonlight. She certainly looked a picture. I took a deliberate aim, fired, and my bullet taking her fair behind the shoulder, she toppled over without a lurch.

"Then there was a row and a rumpus; such a torrent of exclamations, queries, shouts of delight and eager ejaculations. At all events, the leopard was dead. She measured 7 feet 9 inches—one of the biggest and most handsomely marked animals I have ever shot. How to account for her strange visit and her unusual forbearance, I cannot. The incident happened as I have described.* How the dogs did not discern her presence, I know not. All I know is, that the skin long decorated my mother's fireside at home; and from this nocturnal intrusion my nerves received the rudest shock they have ever experienced during a rather adventurous and varied career among the wild denizens of the Indian brakes and jungles."

* This adventure is briefly mentioned in a former chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

"THE HABITATIONS OF HORRID CRUELTY."

Back to camp—A piteous burden—The agonised mother—The father's story—Pity and indignation—An ingrate servant—Fiendish barbarity—The long weary night—Welcome arrival of the old doctor—Hovering 'twixt life and death—Skilful surgery—"Who did it?"—The tell-tale slate—How the deed was done—Retribution.

By the time I had finished narrating my nocturnal adventure with the leopard, we had nearly arrived back again at the camp. On a nearer approach to the tents, we could plainly perceive, from the unusual noise and bustle, that something extraordinary had happened. The servants were hurrying to and fro with agitated looks and gestures, and a dense crowd of villagers, each swaying his arms, brandishing his iron-shod *lathee*, and all speaking excitedly together, showed plainly that no ordinary event had either happened or was even now being enacted. Jogging and spurring the elephant into a shuffling sort of an amble, we hastily neared the centre of all this tumult, the crowd scattering to right and left at our approach. A lane was thus opened through the intensely excited spectators, and it disclosed to us a spectacle which I will never forget.

Before the *Shamiana*, several *Kahars*, or palkee carriers, were grouped around a rude litter, or *Dhooly*, on which was seated, tailor fashion, a handsome little olive-skinned boy. His garments were literally soaked with blood. It had streamed down his shoulders from two ragged torn wounds in his ears. His breast was crimsoned with the copious flow, and a coagu-

lated pool of the life fluid nearly filled his lap. His clothes were saturated with it, and at the slightest motion it welled up and bubbled frothily out from a frightful gash in the poor little fellow's throat. His throat was nearly cut from ear to ear. His head was bent down upon his chest, and with the fingers of the left hand he clutched the edges of the gaping gash, the blood oozing through the poor bent fingers as he tried to stem the fatal drain. He sat perfectly motionless and still. He seemed at the last stage of exhaustion. His eye alone betrayed intelligence. It was clouded by a look of intense suffering and pain, but its intelligent glance showed that he was keenly observant of all that was passing around.

A hurried inquiry of Joe put us in possession of all the facts, so far as he knew them.

Our friends had finished breakfast, and were lolling about the camp, some filling cartridges, one cleaning his gun, and George giving directions to the *Khansammah*, or butler, when they beheld a tumultuous group of villagers approaching the tents, surrounding the *Dhooly*, which the *Kahars* were carrying at a rapid pace. The mother of the poor little sufferer in the litter was rending the air with frantic cries, beating her breast, while her disordered garments and scattered grey locks streaming in the air showed the utter abandonment of her grief.

Indeed, from the time the boy had been brought into camp, she ceased not her lamentations, but was now seated beside the litter on the ground, throwing her head wildly back, swaying to and fro, beating her breast, and wailing out with an agonising piteousness of expression—

"*Dohai, dohai, sahiban! Arree bap re bap!! Mera babawah. Ai ho mera babawah! Arree bap re bap!!*"

("Mercy, mercy, gentlemen! Oh, father, my father!! Alas, my child, my child! Oh, my father!!")

The poor mother was nearly demented with grief. Those

who have not seen the fierce, uncontrollable passion of the Oriental nature, when conventionality is thrown to the winds under the impulse of an overmastering emotion, can form little idea of the piteous abandonment—the despairing, thrilling passionateness of this appeal. The poor woman was almost hoarse—her voice choked at times—her burning eyes had refused to weep more tears. She was wholly given up to her intense passionate grief. Without a moment's cessation she continued her wailing exclamations, and it was with the utmost difficulty we could get her pacified enough to let us hear the explanations we were all burning to receive. At length the hope and soothing inspired by our presence seemed to relieve her; sobbing as if her poor heart would burst, while the big tears chased each other down her cheeks, we prevailed on her to be comparatively silent, and the husband, a tall, stately, intelligent-looking *Bunneah*, or grain merchant, stepped forth.

He, too, was labouring under intense agitation and excitement, which he struggled manfully to master. Even then the grave courtesy of the well-to-do Hindoo did not desert him. With a lowly salaam and graceful wave of his shapely arm, he apologised for appearing before the *Sahibs* with uncovered head. Then he told his story. He was interrupted frequently by the remarks and exclamations of the bystanders. It was an exciting scene enough, and there was plenty of noise, interruption, clamour, question, and rejoinder. At times the poor mother would break out into another loud cry, beseeching mercy, protection, vengeance. The crowd kept increasing, and we all listened as patiently as we could, and with a feeling of growing horror and indignation, as the poor father delivered himself of his narrative.

Shortly, it was to this effect. The facts are all well known, and created a mighty sensation in the *Pergunna*, where they occurred, at the time.

The child had been missed from the village the preceding

evening, at the usual hour for retiring, and search had been made for him high and low. His father was a man in very comfortable circumstances for this part of the country, and the boy was an only son. According to a very common custom in these parts, the *lurka*, or boy, was decorated with silver bangles on his wrists, and wore jewelled ear-rings in his ears. He also had a valuable silver armlet worn above the elbow; and as the night wore on without news of the missing lad's whereabouts, the anxious searchers and watchers began to fear that the boy had met with foul play.

Their ominous forebodings were but too well founded. In the morning, several of the villagers came upon the poor little fellow in much the same plight as I have described. The ornaments had been ruthlessly torn from his ears—torn literally from the warm living flesh. He had been stripped of his other ornaments, and then, to make sure of his murderous work remaining undetected, the callous, fiendish monster who had thus shown his ruffian, cruel nature, had gashed the poor child's throat with some blunt, jagged instrument, and left his victim, as he imagined, slowly bleeding to death.

The boy was a comely, intelligent little fellow, and had been one of the brightest and most forward pupils in the Government vernacular school in the village. When his enemy departed (all this came out afterwards, as we shall see), he felt that his only hope of life was to try to staunch the flow of blood. His head had sunk down upon his breast, and by keeping it in that position, and trying to close the gaping edges of his fearful wound, he found that the flow of blood abated. All through the night the brave little fellow had battled with his faintness and weakness. He had a conviction that he would not die. He tried to crawl out of the patch of thatching grass and make for the village, but his strength quickly failed him.

The neighbours found him as I have described, sitting on

the ground at the edge of the grass, bathed in blood, speechless, and his poor little body nearly drained dry. To all their eager queries, and wild, incoherent questionings, he could make no answer. When his agonised father and mother appeared on the scene, the quick glance of recognition and mute appealing look he gave them, showed his mind was clear. He tried to speak, but a choking gurgle was all the sound he could make. Every attempt he made to articulate only increased the welling up of the crimson torrent, and with a weary, despairing gesture of resignation, he seemed to bend submissively to fate.

The distracted parents did not know what to do, but an aged Brahmin, knowing our camp was close by, happily suggested that the boy should be carried before the Sahibs. No sooner was the suggestion uttered, than it was acted upon.

A *Dhooly* and bearers were procured. The child was tenderly lifted into it, and, accompanied by nearly every inhabitant of the village, the melancholy procession started for the tents.

In the meantime "Butty," remembering that there was a native doctor at a neighbouring *Thanna,* or police-station, had got on horseback and galloped off as hard as he could ride to fetch the doctor, telling Joe to send out a fast elephant to meet them. George and myself, who both knew a little of surgery in an amateurish way, had got lint, cold water, bandages, and other appliances, and were now carefully sponging the terrible wound.

We found the wind-pipe had been almost severed. The poor child at times seemed in danger of choking. Nearly all the blood in his body seemed to have been drained away. His pulse was scarcely perceptible, but his mute appealing look plainly thanked us for our attentions, and he seemed fully conscious and observant of all that was passing.

The only thing that seemed practicable for us to do, was

to try and put in two suture needles (I had a case of surgical instruments with me), and compress the edges of the wound by twisting thread round the projecting ends of the needles.

Fortunately our surgical skill was not subjected to a prolonged or severe strain. A sudden tumult and shouting caused us to look up, and we found "Old Mac" indulging in a sort of caper that made us imagine he had suddenly taken leave of his senses. A clatter of horses' hoofs and a wild shout of triumph enlightened our understandings, and at a rapid hand gallop "Butty" rode up, threw himself from his horse, scattered the natives to right and left, and was immediately followed by the portly form and jovial beaming face of our jolly station doctor, Surgeon-Major T——, whose timely arrival on the scene was providential.

"Old Bones," as we called him, with a quick glance took in at once the whole posture of affairs, and losing no time in questions, or exchange of salutations even, he was on his knees beside the poor little sufferer in an instant, whipped the sponge from my hand, and was busily brushing away the clotted blood, with all the tender gentleness of a woman and the practised skill of the experienced surgeon. Sorely tested endurance and over-strained nature had now given way, and poor little Balkhrishna (the boy's name) had fainted.

Scarcely a perceptible motion stirred his breast. We thought he was dead. The doctor hung over him. A faint, very faint indication of the passage of air round the livid edges of the wound, and a scarce noticeable aeration of the clotted blood, showed that the poor child still managed barely to draw breath.

The first words of the doctor as he looked angrily around were: "Send those niggers away!"

"What's that infernal old woman howling about?" That was the next interjection, and was directed to the poor wailing mother.

"Take her out o' that!" pursued the doctor, sharp and stern; "one would imagine something was the matter."

Then he quickly whispered to me, "Come along, Maori! Bear a hand. Quick! This is life or death. We must get the boy into the tent."

We lifted the poor, seemingly lifeless child inside. Then the doctor turned up his sleeves, and, as tenderly as a mother could have done, he bathed the pallid face of the boy, and the materials being speedily procured, he rapidly set to work to sew up the wound.

We moistened the child's lips with brandy, but feared every minute that the doctor had arrived after all too late, and that the little fellow was beyond the reach of human aid.

How anxiously we watched every varying indication, as under the doctor's skilful fingers the wound seemed to become less horrible to look at. I need not linger over the details. A surgical operation to the unprofessional reader is not an interesting subject of description. The job was certainly a famous one in many respects, and I dare say there are few Indian surgeons now living who have not heard the particulars of T.'s jungle tracheotomy.

The doctor found that the wind-pipe had been cut into, and that to insure ability to breathe he would have to make a false wind-pipe. The operation was most skilfully performed. One of us happened to have a new meerschaum pipe in camp, and out of the silver tubing round the stem the doctor extemporised a capital substitute for the usual silver tube let into the trachea by the surgeon in the operation of tracheotomy; and having done this, dressed the wound, and attended to the poor torn ears, he had done all that human skill could do. The issue was in higher hands.

I may as well here give the sequel. For three days and nights the poor little patient hovered between life and death. He must many times have been very near the mysterious

border that separates us from the "great beyond." Thanks, however, to his brave constitution, and the proverbial quick healing tendency of the temperate Hindoo system, he began to mend, after he had been tended with every care for three days and nights. During that time, T. waited on his patient with almost maternal devotion and care. He had come out to join our hunt, but he refused to leave the side of the couch, whereon lay his little unconscious charge. Every necessary appliance had been procured, of course, from the "station," and, by injecting stimulants and anodynes, the child had been kept alive. It was, in fact, a fierce wrestle with death. In the end, skill, assiduity, watchful care, and a hardy young life battled successfully through, but it was a tough struggle.

Meantime, we were consumed with an all-devouring curiosity to find out the clue to the mystery. We speculated if the miscreant who had committed the dastardly act would ever be discovered. The native police had been scouring the country, and following up every possible indication, but without success. Our District-Superintendent himself had come out, and we had all carefully searched the grass, where the poor child had been discovered, after the murderous attack upon his life, to see if we could discover any clue to the ruffian.

A *hussooah* had been found near the scene of the cruel deed, and as it was rusty and stained with blood, there was little doubt but that with this weapon the unknown dastard had perpetrated his murderous act. A *hussooah* is a rough, village-made hand-sickle, used in harvesting operations. It has a serrated edge, like a blunt saw, is made by the village blacksmiths, and is used in cutting alike the crops of barley, wheat, and oats, the thick, hard stems of the *gennara* and maize, and the *rahur* stalks that yield the luscious fattening *dall*, or Indian pulse.

On the third day, there was a slight improvement in the

little patient. His pulse was stronger. His eye looked brighter. We were all collected round him in the tent, after tiffin. I remember it was a Sunday, and none of us had left the camp. The boy's father was there, but the poor mother, after the first frantic outbreak, had remembered the claims of custom, the tyranny of *dustoor*, and had retired to nurse her grief, and feed on her agonising suspense, in the dark solitude of the enclosed courtyard of the Bunneah's *dukan*, or shop in the village. We can picture to ourselves the anxious moments that the poor woman must have passed; how each sound would be fraught with terror, each moment with foreboding. But her little son was not yet doomed. He was not to die just yet.

We were, as I have said, all collected round the camp bed on which the child was lying. Doubtless, the same thought was present to more minds than one. I was thinking—

"What cruel, callous ruffian could have done this?"

The boy opened his eyes. He seemed to recognise us again. A wan smile flickered over his features. He made a motion with his hand, and pointed to his breast. We were all attention at once. He was evidently trying to express himself, but his tongue refused utterance. At every interval of consciousness the question had been put to him, and re-put over and over again:

"Who did this?"

But hitherto no light had been shed on the mystery.

Now again the doctor bent down.

"*Abhi bolna sukta?*" he asked—"Are you able to speak now?"

A negative motion of the head.

Pointing to his throat again, the doctor asked:—

"*Coan Kurdea?*"

"Who has done it?"

A gleam of intelligence flashed from the child's eyes. He tried to raise his head.

We gently helped him to a sitting position.

Then he wearily and faintly moved his fingers in imitation of writing.

"Aha!" burst out the father, who had been intently observing every look, every movement.

"Aha! He wants to write! He has learned to write at the village school. Now we shall find out who did it!"

As the father poured this torrent of words out in quick excited sentences—of course in Hindoostanee—the little fellow nodded.

We procured a slate and slate-pencil and handed it to the boy.

"Who did it?" was again the question asked.

Slowly and with infinite labour, the faint fingers tried to trace the characters.

The situation was truly dramatic. It was intensely exciting.

Shakily, oh, how shakily! the thin dusky little hand moved the pencil.

But the letters grew.

R-A-M. Ram!

Cha-ra-na. Such are the Hindoo letters.

"*Ramchurn Gope!*" shouted old Mac. "The infernal scoundrel!"

We each drew a long breath. The name of the would-be murderer was out at last, and Justice would assert herself.

I need not weary my readers by further elaborating the details. The full particulars came out very clearly at the subsequent trial.

I remember the sensation in court, as old Doctor T. carried in the wan shrunken little fellow whom his skill and care had indubitably won back almost from the very clutch of death; and how the slate with the two damnatory words on it, were curiously examined by a crowd of planters who thronged the court.

Ramchurn Gope, the ruthless scoundrel who had hacked the poor child's throat in the manner I have described, was a sullen-looking, low-browed cowherd in the service of little Balkhrishna's father, the wealthy Bunneah.

On the night of his cruel attempt to murder his master's child, he had been gambling with some of the young fellows of a similar caste to his own, and had lost a few pice, paltry copper coins. This gambling is a regular passion with many of the natives. They are worse than the Chinese with their *fan tan*. They play for cowrie stakes, at a sort of complicated checkers, and they get terribly fascinated by the game and excited over it.

The youth Ramchurn—he was but a youth—was of a common enough but forbidding type among the low caste Hindoos. Little removed from the brute, he had all the fierce unreasoning greed, the cruel nature, the crafty cunning, and utter callousness of the brute. As he retired from the gambling scene, smarting under his losses, the pretty artless boy came in his way. His cruel eyes only saw the silver ornaments and jewels. His cupidity was fired at once. Reckless and ruthless, the devil found him ready to yield to the temptation, and at once his mind was made up. He resolved on the instant he would murder the child, possess himself of the silver bangles, pawn these, and with the money retrieve his losses.

He had little difficulty in inducing the child to accompany him to the grass field. He said he had left his *hussooah* there, would Balkhrishna go with him to look for it. The poor unconscious little victim trotted off with his intended murderer. You know the sequel.

The villain, after the perpetration of his horrid crime, seems to have been visited with no touch of compunction. It was found out by the police that he had pawned one of the bangles with a grain seller in a neighbouring village, and though this rascal must have known that the bangle was

stolen, and in all probability belonged to the poor child, never a word did he say of the matter. Such would be no uncommon trait in a Hindoo huckster's character. They will do almost anything for money. Of course I mean the baser sort amongst them. These village usurers are terribly covetous and unscrupulous.

Ramchurn went about his usual work, unsuspected in all the awful grief that had come on the family. Stolid, unimaginative, conscienceless, he tended his plough bullocks till he was seized by the police with old Mac and the District Superintendent at their head, and then he bowed to fate, acknowledged all, and seemed to acquiesce in every subsequent step that was taken to prove his guilt, as quite an unnecessary fuss and supererogatory trouble.

He was hanged. Never did gallows tree bear more merited fruit.

This case is very illustrative of one phase of Hindoo native character. What strikes a European is the horrible cruelty of the man; yet such cases are far from uncommon. The wonderful and notable features in this case, were the splendid illustrations of quick resource and surgical skill of the doctor, the bravery and self-possession and wondrous recovery of the lad, and the dramatic surroundings and accessories of the whole chain of incidents; but in my experience of the natives, I have often noticed instances of the same stolid indifference to suffering, callous disregard of human life, and horrible cruelty of disposition, scarcely inferior in ruthlessness and beast-like remorselessness to the true instance I have just described.

The records of every famine abound with illustrations of the same fiendish cruelty. The worship of Kali—the ceremony of Suttee—the practice of infanticide—the torturings practised by the old native police, and the myrmidons of wealthy Zemindars or land-holders, when extorting blackmail or squeezing back rents out of hapless villagers, and

hundreds of other episodes of native life, all furnish examples of the same pagan vice—the vice of cruelty. Whatever scoffers and enemies of the Christian religion may urge against it or its professors, they cannot but admit that it has a softening, refining, humanising influence, and tends—indubitably tends—to lessen cruelty and make man less beast-like and more God-like. Before I finish these sketches, I will give a few more illustrations of the savage ruthless nature of the heathen worshipper, and prove how true is the verse, part of which heads my present chapter—

"The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of horrid cruelty."

CHAPTER V.

ROUGH-RIDING IN INDIA.

News of a "kill"—Elephants in line—The jungle at early dawn—Half through the *Baree*—A tiger charges—A bolting elephant—Smash goes the *howdah*—Escape of "Butty"—Wasps and elephants—"Dotterel"—A razor-backed elephant—"That demon of a dog"—Bolted—A shaker—How to tame a vicious tusker.

On the morning following the Monday, Joe awoke us all very early from a sound sleep, with the welcome news that the scouts reported a "kill" near a village to the south of the camp.

A cowherd had brought the news that a fine female buffalo and calf had been killed during the night, dragged out of the *batan*, or cattle camp, and, from various evidences, we concluded that it was no ordinary robber that had thus paid his attentions to the unlucky herd, but a ferocious, daring animal that might be expected to show sport. In the first place, the brute had boldly ventured into the very midst of the enclosed herd, and had singled out one of the finest and biggest of the buffaloes. It had seized the unfortunate animal by the neck, breaking the vertebræ, and then dragged it clear of the *batan*, over a dry watercourse and into a clump of reeds, where it had partially devoured the carcase. The calf had been killed by a single blow of the brute's powerful paw, and, notwithstanding a wild stampede by the herd, and all the shouting of the *bataneas*, or herdsmen, the tiger had managed to stick to his prey and undauntedly carry it off.

All this was narrated with much volubility and breathless

haste. The *khubberia—i.e.*, news-bearer—was greatly excited; his action was dramatic enough to rouse our imaginations, and from his description we were led to believe that the tiger must be a "whopper." Already Joe had despatched "old Juggroo," his tracker, to the spot, and after a plunge bath in the clear tank, and a hasty *chota hazirce*, or little breakfast, the elephants were marshalled in array, we clomb into our *howdahs*, and off we set to beat up the *baree* in which it was said the gorged tiger had lain up.

It is a fine sight to see a line of elephants set out from camp at early morn, when the dew is yet glistening on the tall waving grass. The green broom-like *jowah* is beaded with pearly drops, which are shaken off in a glittering sparkling shower as the mighty beasts go crashing through. As the *howdah* brushes against some unusually tall clump of bushes, the dewy burden is showered over cartridges and guns, and you objurgate the *mahout* for his careless driving.

The heads of the riders on the smaller elephants, with their red and blue *puggries*, bob about among the tall *jowah*, like poppies in a field of Brobdingnagian corn. The *howdahs* sway, like drunken ships at sea, above the leafy foliage, suggesting to the tyro the fear that the occupants are momentarily about to be pitched out. The bright morning sun shoots down his cheering beams, which are reflected back from the polished gun-barrels; the glittering *kookries*, or jungle knives, of the peons, who are perched like monkeys on the pad elephants, holding on to the ropes, and the gleaming silvery spear-heads of perhaps a score of stalwart beaters, glint fitfully at intervals through the openings in the tall jungle.

All is gaiety and animation. We have certain *khubber, i.e.*, news of tiger. The grateful manilla scents the still air as the curling blue puffs mount slowly into the crisp fresh atmosphere. It is not yet too hot, and long dank quivering lines of mist lie in the hollows and by the water-courses,

Far above, near the horizon, a dull grey bank of dun cloud looms, prophetic of a westerly, dust-laden, fiery-furnace blast about the middle of the forenoon; but for the present all is dewy, fresh, and delightful.

The old boar, with his "sounder," is trotting slowly down by the lily-covered lagoon. The hog deer is trampling down for his favourite hinds a snug retreat in the cool dark recesses of the impenetrable jungle by the old mound that marks the site of a ruined fortress, erstwhile manned by grim Mussulman warriors, in the days of Aurungzebe. The black partridge is crowing in the *jowah* jungle; the peafowl are leisurely sauntering to the deeper shade of the remote forest, after a night of fearful dissipation in the grain fields; and the quail are calling in the corn lands, while flocks of grey and golden plover, circling flights of silvery teal and swooping pintails, or feathery clouds of tiny ortolan and mooneas, flash like meteoric rain in the blinding sunshine, over glassy pool and dew-bespangled mead. All over the vast plain there is a soft diffused radiance—a fresh brightness, an exuberance of life and colour—and the heart of the hunter is glad. We hum snatches of songs; we exchange gay repartee and banter; the elephants tramp along briskly, here and there plucking down a succulent bunch of juicy reed tops, swishing it against their mighty sides, and then slowly crunching it up with evident satisfaction and *gout*. There is a flap, flap, flap of the mighty ears—a swish, swish, swish of the great ugly tufted tails—and the ponderous, flexible, marvellous trunks are never for an instant still.

Then, as we near the *locale* of the "kill," pipes are laid aside, cartridges are sorted, and the locks click, as the guns are tried. We form a line; the word is given by the captain, and, slowly and majestically, the picturesque array of great ponderous animals surge ahead through the swaying, waving grass, and the tumultuous fierce excitement of a beat for tiger begins.

Our information led us to look for the tiger in a dense, matted, difficult piece of tree jungle. Cotton trees, fig trees, cork trees, Llianas, creepers, and prickly clinging tendrils, twisted and twined in all directions, and sprawling bamboos, and the pendent rootlets of the *Bhur* trees formed a dense, almost impenetrable tangle, through which the elephants had laboriously to force a passage. Joe and myself were stationed on ahead, to secure a shot if possible at the retreating tiger, if he should show his stripes.

The crashing of mighty branches as the elephants tore them from the trees—the snapping of others like pistol shots, when the powerful brutes broke them across, as a faggot gatherer would snap a withered stick; and the swaying surging rush, as some tall leafy sapling, bent, reeled, and uprooted, fell with a dull crash into the thick jungle below, all told us that the line was advancing, and the elephants were being well handled.

The "*Baree,*" as such a jungle is termed, resounded with the shouts, oaths, and cries of the excited beaters. The deafening clatter of several tom-toms, the occasional shrill trumpeting of an impatient *hathee* (elephant), as a tough prickly creeper would trail a scar across his trunk, and the indescribable mingled medley of crashing sound, which always accompanies a beat in the jungle by elephants, formed welcome music in our ears.

The line had got half through the "Baree," when, right in the centre of the beaters, close under Butty's elephant, there was a fierce roar, and an enormous tiger bounded out, flashed for a second his yellow stripes before the startled sportsman, and, with a rush, disappeared in the tangled undergrowth on ahead. Not two minutes later, Joe's trusty bone-smasher rung out a sharp quick challenge, answered with a succession of roars that showed the bullet had sped truly on its mission. The tiger, with over an ounce of lead in his flank, bolted back, and charged the first elephant he encountered. This

was a half-broken, and not wholly staunch, animal, belonging to a wealthly "*mahunt*," * near Emamnugger. It had never been charged before by a wounded tiger, and its courage was not equal to such an unexpected strain. Spite of the *mahout's* hammering and exertions, the poor brute turned tail and fled.

Now this is one of the most dangerous things that can happen in tiger-shooting. Everything may depend on the staunchness of your elephant. Rather than ride a coward *shikaree hathee*, or hunting elephant, you had better remain at home. In its blind unreasoning dread of the roaring demon, that with eyes blazing wrath, bristles erect, lips retracted, and formidable fangs flashing, comes bounding down upon it at the charge, an untried elephant will not unnaturally turn tail and incontinently "skedaddle" as hard as it can lay legs to the ground; and let me tell you, *en parenthèse*, that if fear does not absolutely lend wings to a bolting elephant, it can make him go at a pace that would astonish the inexperienced in such matters.

Away, then, went the Mahunt's *Mukna* (the native name for the short straight-tusked variety of elephant), and, roaring like a fiend, the wounded tiger gave chase.

His pursuit did not last long. Pat again got a lucky shot, which caught the monster in the fore shoulder, and crumpled him up like a rose leaf. It was a regular smasher. Another bullet through the heart quickly settled him.

Meantime the terror-stricken elephant crashed straight through the heavy tree jungle. His one object was to get away from the tiger. Butty's servant behind the *Howdah* wisely threw himself off, that is, he slid over the fairly frightened brute's rump, and rolled into a prickly bush, where he lay roaring to all the Hindoo gods and goddesses

* A *Mahunt* is the head of a religious order of Ascetics in India. Corresponds to the prior or chief abbot of a monastery in mediæval Europe. Many of these orders presided over by the *Mahunt* are wealthy, having lands and property attached to their monastery.

for *Dohai*—mercy and help. He fancied every minute he would make a mouthful for the tiger, and his sudden descent and hideous outcry but added to the blind terror of the now fairly ungovernable "bolter."

The *Mahout* was powerless. He tried to turn the brute aside from a low overhanging branch—twisted, gnarled and moss-encrusted—that stretched like a giant arm across the way as if determined to bar further passage. There was just room for the elephant to pass beneath. It was a miracle Butty was not smashed to pieces on the spot. His quick eye and ready resource saved him. As it was, he clutched hold of an upper branch with all the energy of despair. By an agile spring and strong muscular effort, he swung himself clear, just as the *Howdah* was smashed into splinters and swept like touchwood from the back of the unwieldy runaway, as it rushed beneath the branch. Poor Butty's guns were sent flying in all directions, one of them exploding in the air, and sending a bullet whistling through the trees in very unwelcome proximity to George's ear. Soda-water bottles popped; cartridges, tumblers, a water-bottle, cigars, fragments of canework, and splinters of wood, were scattered all around, and with the wreckage of the unfortunate *Howdah* banging against her ribs, the now ten times more maddened elephant tore through the jungle, fully persuaded that the devilish tiger was seated on her rump. She was only found again late at night, miles away from the jungle, shrunken, foundered, jaded, and still trembling in every limb.

The poor *Mahout* came worst speed in the *mêlée*. He got his thigh badly smashed, was knocked insensible, and had a narrow escape of his life.

"Butty" had a very "close shave" of it, and this incident affords a good illustration of the dangers of tiger-hunting. Of all the perils, that of a bolting elephant is the most to be dreaded.

On one occasion "Mac" had nearly lost his life in a much similar case, and but a short time before, poor young B., a genial gifted gallant young cavalry officer, had been dashed against a tree while trying to throw himself from a bolting elephant during a pig-sticking party, and had been killed on the spot.

I have known an elephant to bolt on more than one occasion, through the attacks of wasps or ground hornets. The Indian wasp is no whit less truculent a customer than his jimp-waisted yellow-ringed British cousin. In many of the forests, colonies of wasps fabricate great conical nests, of some papery material, which are attached to the under side of the branch of some over-arching giant of the woods. As the ponderous elephants crash through the leafy jungle, tearing down creepers and clinging vines, these sweep off the citadel of the wasps, and down they come in a swarm on the unconscious cause of offence. The huge pachyderm that he is may be staunch enough to face the furious onslaught of a boar at bay, the savage onset of the bulky rhinoceros, or the fearsome charge of the Bengal tiger himself. His thick hide may be tough enough and proof against the sounding whacks of the *gudjbaj* or *Jhetha* (elephant goad and spear), but the buzzing, piercing, pungent, pertinacious, vicious little devils, with their poisonous stings, are too much altogether for his equanimity, and ten to one, that highly-trained, courageous and sagacious as he is, he will rush trumpeting in frantic fear, and mad with pain and rage through the forest.

Well for the occupant of the *Howdah*, then, if he can guide the reckless rush of the poor maddened brute. Better for him if he can slide over the rump of his elephant, but in that case he had better take his blanket with him; or, in escaping the chance of having his brains dashed out against a tree, he may be but jumping from the frying-pan into the fire. The wasps will to a certainty transfer their attentions to him, and if he be not immediately covered from head to foot in his

blanket, he stands a chance of being stung to death. I have known more than one case in which natives have thus fallen victims.

The ground hornets, "*Bhowras*," are nearly if not quite as bad. They come buzzing out in an angry swarm from the round funnel-shaped entrance to their underground stronghold, if the unfortunate elephant have trod on their mossy mound, and then it is *sauve qui peut.* Clean heels must be shown, or woe betide you.

Not unfrequently too, in tree jungle, you may dislodge a colony of the fiery red forest ants which come showering down on your howdah, and make matters very lively for you while the engagement lasts. They tackle like bulldogs, and stick to you like a Bathurst burr to a sheep's fleece, and one always tries to give them a wide berth.

Once in particular I had the misfortune to experience an involuntary canter on a bolting elephant. Talk of "rough riding," of sitting a "buck jumper," of straddling a camel, or getting across a working bullock! Being on a rough shambling galloping elephant is a combination of the worst points of all these.

It was in this way.

H., my assistant, and myself, had gone over from Lutchmeepore to a factory some ten or twelve miles distant, to look up a neighbour who the natives had reported was down with fever.

We found "Dotterel" (of course I suppress real names) suffering from a long debauch. The poor fellow had been unfortunate, and had taken to a friend—the brandy bottle—to drown care, and quench regret, and his friend (?) had brought him to a pretty pass. I had met him years before, when his path in life promised well, and he was then a handsome, spirited, intelligent youngster, full of hope and bright self-reliance, and possessed of every one's good opinion and hearty good wishes.

Now we found a sad wreck. Poor Dotterel was sallow, emaciated, unshorn, blear-eyed, a shivering, sodden drunkard, trembling as with the palsy, and as utterly wretched-looking a mortal as I have ever come across. His house, an old unused factory bungalow, was squalid and unfurnished. The poor fellow was really ill, and I determined to take him back to my place, and try to infuse a little vigour into him, and give him a chance to recover his health and self-respect.

We had a cross, sullen, badly trained brute of a *hatni* with us (*Hatni* is a female elephant), which belonged to my factotum, Geerdharee Jha, a portly Brahmin, who filled the post of confidential adviser to me, in my Zemindaree diplomacy.

Geerdharee was what the Scotch would call a "geyan grippy sort o' body." He liked to keep an elephant—it added to his dignity—but he grudged the keep of a competent *Mahout*. So the poor brute was ill-fed, badly cared for, and some low-caste village "Jackaroo" was generally told off to cut fodder for the half-starved brute, and drive it on the rare occasions when the loan of it was asked for by such an one as myself.

It was in the height of the rains, and the country was half submerged, or I would never have tried such a journey on such a sorry steed (if I can apply that title to a razor-backed elephant).

The pad, too, was villainously dirty, badly stuffed, and ragged, and the ropes that bound it to the elephant were rotten and knotted in innumerable places.

We got Dotterel hoisted on to the pad. H. sat facing the tail. I bestrode the lumbering brute, behind the greasy malodorous *Mahout*, who straddled the neck of the *hatni*, and off we set.

Now all elephants are timorsome of any animal, noise, or thing that makes any demonstration at their rear. A well-trained hunting elephant would face the foul fiend himself, tail, hoofs, sulphur and all, if he confronted him face

to face—but they do not like anything to approach too closely behind them.

We got on pretty well till we reached a village about a mile or so from the factory, when a yellow, mangy demon of a dog came bouncing forth from the mound of ashes whereon he lay licking his sores, and began barking and blustering close to the heels of our elephant; and his damnable din aroused all the curs of the village, who, rushing out, added to the demoniac chorus, and fairly frightened the senses out of our unmanageable moving framework of bones and hide.

The "Dhaus" lay before us. A villainous marsh, full of rotten holes and treacherous quicksands—a slimy, quaking, abominable bog, tangled o'er with matted tenacious marsh weeds; and indeed a nasty dangerous place.

H. was an old hand, and realised our danger at once. He slid off with as much agility as he was capable of, and came bang upon mother earth, with all the force of Antaeus, but not with the like favourable result. He required a cushioned chair for a full fortnight afterwards.

Poor Dotterel was already shaken and exhausted with the long rough ride, and when the infernal "bolter" plunged into the water with a lurch, the shock threw my trembling unnerved guest headlong into the muddy ooze, and there he stuck, and might have been fairly smothered, had not some *mullahs*, or fishermen, close by come to his assistance, and extricated him half-choked and wholly demoralised, from his involuntary mud bath.

The miserable apology for a *mahout* was in a state of mortal funk. His teeth were chattering with fright, and he could only howl out, "*Aree bap re bap!*"—"*Dhoob jaega!*" We'll be drowned! We'll be drowned!! We'll be drowned!!!

By this time the elephant had somewhat recovered from her funk, but plainly saw that she was mistress of the situation. She evidently held her *mahout* in utter contempt.

She had recourse to a common trick of badly bred, ill-tempered elephants. She commenced to rock violently to and fro, endeavouring to shake us off her back. The fine succulent stalks of the water-plants were forbidden forage to her. Elephants are passionately fond of some kinds of this food, but, if unaccustomed to it, it has a tendency to scour the animals. She was evidently determined to get quit of all incumbrances, and enjoy a surreptitious feast.

She reckoned without her host, however.

I felt that a very little more of this awful shaking would not only shake all the sense out of me, but would infallibly send the rotten ropes and rickety pad flying. I was holding on like grim death to the ropes with one hand, while the other clutched the mahout's snaky locks.

He still kept howling.

I slipped quickly behind him on to the neck of the elephant, snatched the *gudjbaj*, or iron driving hook, from his hand, gave him a sounding whack on the side of the head, and saw him take a regular dive into the Dhaus.

I could scarcely help laughing—but my situation was critical. The *mahout* could wade and swim like a Paddy-bird, so there was no fear for him.

I was alone in the middle of a dangerous morass, with a cunning vicious elephant.

Her malicious little eyes twinkled. She tried her utmost to shake me off; she ducked her head, nearly straining my back in two with the jerks, but I was firmly seated behind her ears; and now I rained a shower of blows on her huge long head, that rattled again like an anvil under the lusty battery of the blacksmith.

The brute curled round her trunk several times, and tried to seize me, but I met the proboscis each time with a shower of blows, and then digging in the sharp point of the iron behind the root of the ear, I made the vicious brute scream again, and trumpet for mercy and forgiveness.

She was soon fairly cowed, for I showed her no leniency, and after infinite trouble I got safely across the dangerous ground.

Once or twice she tried to sidle off into deep water, where of course, if she had dived, I would have been at her mercy, but I managed to get to land all right.

H. and D. came over in a boat, and I never again asked Geerdharee for the loan of his abominable uncanny brute of an elephant.

Poor Butty's disaster, and the death of the tiger, put an end to that day's shooting, and we returned to camp after an *al fresco* lunch beneath a fine old Bhur tree in the "Baree."

CHAPTER VI.

THE BEAR AND THE BLACKSMITH.

A Bancoorah yarn—Billy the blacksmith—The black sloth bear—Camp at Susunneah marble quarries—A transformation scene—Night melodious—*Locale* of the hunt—To our posts!—The beat—Billy is dry—"Look out! there's a bear!"—Down goes Billy—Bruin a-top—A novel wrestling match—Intense excitement—Over the precipice!—Search for the body—Miraculous escape—"Twanka diddleoh"—More about bears—The surveyor's fight for life—A terrible disfigurement—Marvels of modern surgery—A sweetheart true as steel—A slap at sceptics—"Truth stranger than fiction."

ONE evening after a blank day for tiger, we were all sitting under the *shamianah*, and the conversation turned on bears.

Pat was very anxious to get a bear-skin, to send to his friends, and it was his remark, I think, which gave a direction to the talk.

"Oh, you never find bears so low down as this," Joe remarked.

"No? I thought there were plenty of them."

"Oh, no; they generally stick to hilly country, or the elevated forest lands, but are rarely met with in grass jungle in the riverine plains such as these."

"Are they dangerous shooting?"

"Well, not particularly. They are easily shot, and a little of it goes a long way."

"They are dangerous brutes at close quarters, though," I remarked.

"How? Did you ever have a tussle with one?"

"Well, not myself, but I have shot them, and have seen many shot, and one of the most exciting adventures I ever took part in was with a bear."

"Out with it, Maori."

"Spin us the yarn, old man," with numerous other similar ejaculations.

"Let's have a '*peg*' first," said Mac; and he at once shouted for the Bearer.

The B. and S. was soon brought, and all hands settled down comfortably in their long easy chairs, to hear my story.

I turned to Pat.

"You remember old Billy Parrot?"

"What, little '*Beely*,' as the natives used to call him? I should think I do; what a rum little beggar he was, to be sure."

"Was that the little blacksmith that came up to erect the machinery at Rampore?" said Butty.

"The same."

"He was an awful '*swiper*,' wasn't he?"

"Yes, when he could get it. He was about the strongest little man of his inches ever came into Tirhoot," continued Pat.

"He was altogether a character. Oh, I know your yarn now. It happened down at Bancoorah, didn't it?"

I rejoined in the affirmative.

"Ah," said Pat, "that was a rum go, and no mistake. But you ought to tell these fellows what sort of a man your hero was."

"Oh, you can do that," I rejoined.

"Well, boys," said Pat, nothing loath, "Billy, as you have just heard, was originally a blacksmith. He had been a sailor, and had knocked about the world a good deal, and at last had got a billet in the Calcutta mint, on some miserable *tullub* (*i.e.*, pay) of perhaps 40 or 50 rupees a

month. When Henry H. was down in Calcutta one cold weather, looking about for a man to come up and put his machinery together, he came across Billy. The prospect of a good job in a planting district at 150 rupees a month was quite enough to seduce Billy from his allegiance, and he accordingly came up to Tirhoot.

"He was a good-natured little fellow, as strong as a bull, a splendid wrestler, as we soon found out, but not very polished in his manners—fond of liquor."

"Small blame to him," said George.

"But his *bête noir* was a lady. He never felt at ease when in a lady's presence; for, poor fellow, he had never been much used to polished society, and the ladies used to quiz him unmercifully."

"What was that song he used to sing again? It had a capital chorus, I remember," asked Mac.

"Oh, aye! let me see, what was it?" Pat ruminated.

"I remember the chorus," I said. "Twanka diddleoh—don't you remember, Pat?"

"Ah, that was it. I only remember the beginning of it—

> "I am a good blacksmith,
> The prince of good fellows;
> I drive away care
> While I work at my bellows.

I forget the rest, but the chorus runs thus." Pat then sang—

> "Twanka diddleoh, Twankediddleoh,
> Twankediddle—iddle—iddle—oh;
> He that loves good ale
> Is a jolly good fellow."

I have often wished to get the words of the song. It was a capital chorus, though it may lack the polished beauty of a Tennysonian lyric, and many a time I have joined lustily in the refrain, with choice spirits keen and true, who now sleep

peacefully in the perfumed garden plots of factories, scattered through the sunny plains of Behar.

Billy was tremendously strong, and we used to pit him against native wrestlers whenever we could get him up to the scratch. He was really a proficient wrestler, and very fond of that most manly but much neglected sport. To get up his muscle, Billy used to go into severe training, and I never saw him worsted in an encounter but once, when he was thrown by a slim wiry Brahmin, from somewhere near Delhi.

Contests between trained rams, as well as cock fighting, are very favourite amusements with wealthy natives. Billy had a magnificent trained ram, and I have seen him kneel down, brace up his brawny muscles, and present the fleshy part of his arm and shoulder, for the ram to butt at. In this way, Billy trained both his ram and himself simultaneously, killing "two birds with one stone." To see the ram with "bossed front" come tearing down at the charge at his utmost speed, and come smash on Billy's braced-up muscles with a *souf*, you would have thought his arm must be pounded into a jelly, and that Billy would never survive the shock. It never seemed to hurt him, however. I have seen him go through the ordeal more than once, and the natives used to think him a perfect man of iron.

"Well," said George, "I would object to being made such a *Butt* of, anyway."

Pat shied his slipper at him, while groans arose from all sides.

"You ought to *pipe* us a *stave* after that," said Butty.

Pat again started "Twankediddleoh," and we all joined in the chorus.

When the noise had subsided, they again asked me for my yarn about Billy and the Bear.

Before working up my climax, however, I had perhaps better begin by giving the reader a few items of information

about the Indian bear, and the scene of the occurrence between Billy and Bruin.

Forsyth, in that most delightful book, "The Highlands of Central India," says:—

"The common black sloth bear of the plains of India, *Ursus labiatus*, is very plentiful in the hills, on either side of the Narbadá, between Jubbulpúr and Mandlá. Indeed, there are few parts of these highlands where a bear may not at any time be met with. They are generally very harmless until attacked, living on roots, honey, and insects, chiefly white ants, which they dig out of their earthen hillocks. The natives call them *ádam zád*, or, 'sons of men,' and, considering them half human, will not as a rule molest them. Really, their absurd antics almost justify the idea. Sometimes, however, a bear will attack very savagely without provocation—generally, when they are come upon suddenly, and their road of escape is cut off. As a rule, in frequented parts, they do not come out of their mid-day retreats, in caves and dense thickets, until nightfall; but in remote tracts they may be met with in the middle of the day."

They are plentiful in the western parts of India. In the Bombay Presidency about Shahpore, Goonda, and other localities under the western ghats. They may be met with, too, in Central Assam, and indeed in most of the hilly parts of the mighty Indian Peninsula. I have shot them on the Nepaul Frontier in North Bhaugulpore, and near the border in Oudh, but the scene of the occurrence I am about to narrate lies in Bancoorah. This charming place nestles amid the Rajmehal Hills, in Bengal Proper, and is a favourite haunt of many varieties of large game.

I had received an invitation from our former Superintendent of Police, to join him in a Bear-shooting excursion, and I accordingly packed up my traps and started.

Arrived at Sahibgunge, I had encountered poor Billy, as drunk as the Piper o' Dundee, and held in pawn by the irate

kitmutgar of the Dawk Bungalow, for liquors and other goods supplied. I could not leave Billy to the tender mercies of our sable Aryan brother, and knowing he was very good if put on his honour, I took him along with me. In due course we reached Bancoorah.

I need not weary you with the preliminaries for a *shikar* party in the East. There is no stint of comforts, let me tell you, and the Anglo-Indian well knows how to cater for all the wants of frail mortality.

Our party consisted of the Judge of the District, the Doctor, one or two Calcutta Barristers, my friend the Peeler, Billy, and myself. I had lent Billy a gun; we had always plenty of spare habiliments in our dressing-cases and portmanteaus, and one fine morning off we set from the station in the highest spirits, and after "juist a wee snifter to clear oor thrapples," as the Doctor put it. Needless to remark, our disciple of Galen hailed from "north the Tweed." His prescription gave unbounded satisfaction to Billy, who remarked to me confidentially,—

"Ah, Maori! He's a fine fellow, that Doctor, no mistake!"

After a smart ride, we reached our encampment in the cool of the evening, and again the soothing weed and the worship of Bacchus claimed their votaries. About eight p.m. dinner was announced, and we adjourned to the mess room.

We were camped at a place called Susunneah. Near by were some famous marble quarries. The whole neighbourhood was reported to be well stocked with game. The country was difficult to beat, and we had an army of coolies for that purpose. Among the hills were many rugged gullies and precipitous gorges and numerous caves, among which the bears took up their quarters.

Every arrangement had been made for our comfort, and to those who do not know what high official position, combined

with good pay, can do in the East, I may as well sketch the surroundings. Our mess room for instance.

We found, in this rocky wilderness, an apartment brilliant with flowers and lights, a table glittering with glass and plate, and groaning under the weight of such a repast as is rarely seen, except at the board of some mighty "swell," high up in the Olympian heights of senior service and good appointments.

But two short days before, this banquet hall had been the abode of dirt, discomfort, smoke, noise and confusion. Cobwebs stretched their cheerless cords in dusty festoons from the grimy roof. The smoky walls gave back the lurid gleam of fluttering, flickering flame. Dusky forms were seen through the smoke, gliding about with red-hot iron bars in hand, like evil spirits bent on errands of malice and destruction. A thick sulphureous pall hung all around; and from within came sounds of clanging iron, clattering steel, and a groaning wheezy puffing sound, as if the demons of the pit had got the asthma; but which actually proceeded from about half a dozen broken-winded blacksmiths' bellows. In fact, not to mystify you further, the apartment had been used as the smithy attached to the quarries.

Under the active supervision of my host, however, the forges had been pulled down, anvils and bellows hid away; the floor, cleared of its litter, had been laid with slabs of smooth white stone from the neighbouring quarries.

Under the transforming magic wand of a *raj mistree,* or a master mason, and a pot of whitewash, the walls now glistened white as purity itself, while the grimy cobwebs had given place to tasteful curtains and handsome hangings. But I must "belay"—"heave in the slack," or we will never get to the bears.

Over that dinner I would fain linger. If you want the perfection of cookery, go to India. The fragrant odours, the savoury steams, the tender, juicy, seasoned tit-bits of

game, the incomparable salad, the well-selected wines, the foaming champagne, well iced—for our Calcutta friends had brought up a notable supply of ice with them—and then the after siesta, when, with pipe gently pressed between the lips, the aromatic vapour curling lovingly around our heads, the relaxed fingers of the left hand toying with the polished stem of the champagne goblet, the *punkah* swinging gratefully overhead, mind and body at perfect ease, we—but hold!—this really will *not* do; we shall never get to the bears.

Ah, here comes the *shikari;* so now to give our orders, and then "turn in."

This was accordingly done, and soon a deep silence reigned around, only broken at intervals by a stertorous gurgitation from Billy; a squeak occasionally from the creaking *punkah;* or a rustle, as some uneasy sleeper, on whom the *salmon* had taken effect, turned restlessly on his couch.

Outside, however, in the shade of the trees, a different scene was being enacted. Here a number of *ghatwals* had congregated; and with that intense admiration of classic music which distinguishes the mild and veracious Hindoo, they waked the echoes of the surrounding hills, and lulled the pallid moon to sleep, with gentle serenades, chanted with all the melting pathos which a strongly nasal intonation can bestow, and charmingly accompanied by the brittle diapason of about a dozen large *Sonthali* drums.

This agreeable concert, varied at intervals by the demoniac howling of a pack of jackals and the baying chorus of all the dogs in camp, was maintained till nearly dawn.

Nothing is so dear to the native as this unearthly din all night. They call it music. Profane Anglo-Indians sometimes call it something else—and christen it with a boot-jack, or any handy missile.

At 3.30 a.m., a voice in sweetly modulated tones awoke the silence of the tent in which four of the party were asleep.

"Sahib! Sahib!" No answer.

"Sahib!" a little louder. "*Saree teen budja hai!*" which means, "It's half-past three o'clock." Still no reply. The speaker then gave a gentle twist to a big toe, which protruded from beneath the sheet. Whereupon a voice, like that of the Numean lion, terrible in its wrath, roared out, "*Jchunnum ko jao, soor ka beta,*" which, being translated, meant a peremptory order to the son of a pig to betake himself to the antithesis of Paradise. At the same time the owner of the voice, a brawny giant, uprose, with staring eyes and dishevelled hair, but not before the obsequious attendant had made a precipitate retreat through the friendly doorway.

This awoke all the sleepers, and we were soon discussing *chota hazree*. Then gun cases were opened, cartridges hunted up, arms distributed among the music-loving *ghatwals*, the horses and elephants were brought forward, and all hands fairly started for the jungle, which was some four miles off.

A most suspicious-looking box was sent on ahead, in charge of two brawny coolies who groaned beneath its weight. This was popularly supposed to contain *fireworks*, and, if by a wild fiction you can call a sandwich a catherine wheel, a bottle of soda water a cracker, and other liquors squibs and Roman candles, then it *was* fireworks. Several hours later, when the hot sun had parched the gullets of the sportsmen, the "*fireworks*" were let off to great advantage, I can assure you.

On our arrival in the jungle we found our policeman had arranged everything for our comfort. We were to post ourselves along the edge of a steep precipitous gully—here called a *khud*—and let the *ghatwals* and coolies beat up to us. *Mychans*, or platforms in the trees, had been prepared for us about fifty yards apart; and we were not long in taking our places. Being a pretty good shot, and being moreover an invited guest, I had been told off to the extreme right of the line. Close to my *mychan* was a pretty well

worn deer track, leading to a rugged precipitous descent into the deep *khud* beneath, and in the rear of our position. The sides of the *khud* were strewn with rugged splintered boulders and sharp jutting rocks. In every crevice a multitude of bushes and gnarled trees had found a precarious foothold, and hid the depths below as with an impenetrable screen; but we could hear the gurgling and splashing of a hill-stream far down in the deep recesses; and parrots, mango birds, orioles, and other creatures of gorgeous plumage, darted hither and thither and imparted an aspect of animation to the scene.

Billy was away near the other end of the line, and my friend the Police Superintendent occupied the *mychan* next to mine. Being old stagers we had each provided ourselves with a neat little portable "*moorah*," or cane stool, and from our comfortable perches we smiled with grim satisfaction as dimly, through the leafy screen, we could descry our less thoughtful companions, wriggling on a knot, or straddling a branch with their legs dangling beneath.

I soon disposed of my knife, cartridge belt, and other incumbrances, in branches handy, and with my revolver stuck in my *cummerbund*, I settled myself down, to wait the result of the *hank*, as the beat in forest jungle is termed.

Soon a distant shout announced that the coolies had begun the beat,—the drums could be heard fitfully in the far distance, and the yells and shouts swelled in volume as the men crested a ridge, and became subdued and deadened again as they plunged through the hollows amid the rocky ground. There were numerous caves in the jungle, believed to be tenanted by bears; but as we had received no *certain* intelligence of the presence of Bruin, and as our Calcutta friends were anxious to get all the sport possible, it had been arranged that we were to fire at anything that might get up.

Very soon a rustle was heard in the thicket in front; the sharp crack of a rifle and the whiz of a bullet followed, as

the doctor opened the ball by a shot at a small ravine deer: the deer came over in our direction, and was just "taken out of my teeth" by the "Peeler," who tumbled it over in front of me.

The line of beaters now drew nearer and nearer, and the firing and excitement became general. I knew the crack of the No. 16 I had lent to Billy, and recognised its sharp ping more than once. Hares, partridges, peafowl, jackals, jungle fowl, and other small game, hurried past unheeded. From the tremendous din, we judged bigger game was afoot. Every eye was strained to its widest extent, every ear on the alert, every nerve tense and strung. Soon, with a magnificent bound, a noble stag came leaping forth, followed by a trembling string of frightened fawns and does. He passed the 'Peeler," and received a bullet in the hind leg, and as he tottered up to my *mychan* my express bullet caught him full in the neck, and he toppled over. A few spasmodic struggles and all was still. The hinds went tearing madly down the rugged defile, and then the beaters began to emerge in twos and threes, and we were reluctantly obliged to confess that there was no Bruin "this journey."

We now descended, discussed a few of the "*fireworks*," sent the killed deer away to the foot of the hill, and then again prepared to take up our stations.

The beaters who had beaten from the east end had opened out from the centre and gone right and left face, so as to get clear of the jungle, and were leisurely making their way to the west end to beat back.

A long silent wait now ensued. Our doctor I could just faintly see on his perch, to all appearance fast asleep. C. and I had been exchanging a few quiet remarks in a low undertone, when our ears at the same instant caught a suspicious crackle of breaking sticks, and, pointing our guns at the place whence the sound proceeded, we were ready to fire, when forth from the foliage appeared the heated visage

of Billy, looking like a full moon, and he hailed us in husky accents—

"Maori, for goodness' sake give us a 'peg'! I'm as dry as a lime-burner's wig."

"Confound you, Billy," I said; "why the Dickens couldn't you wait? We might have a bear on us at any moment, and you might spoil the sport.

"Oh, hang the bears," said Billy; "I'm as dry as a match box, and I must have a 'peg'!"

To get quit of him, C. handed him down a leathern bottle containing the needful, and Billy took a long pull; then another, yet another, and then, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, returned the bottle to C. In the meantime I had descended from my *mychan*, foolishly leaving my battery behind me, and was leisurely stepping out to take "a slight taste of the crature" myself. (Note to the tyro in Indian shooting: never leave your gun in jungle-shooting, you know not what at any moment may get up.)

C. was lying full length on his *mychan* reaching down for the bottle, when a shrill whistle made our hearts jump, and the Judge yelled out from the far left—

"Look out, you beggars, there's a bear!"

Instantly I turned to rush back to my perch of safety.

Billy dropped the bottle and spluttered out—

"The devil there is!"

C. sprang into position, and tried to reach down his gun.

In less than five seconds, however, with a curious savage grunt, and a rush through the bushes, a great she-bear was close upon Billy.

She had a little cub, a wee beady-eyed round little ball of fur, hanging like grim death to her back, and she came swiftly with a lurching rolling gait, and it began to look very awkward indeed for Billy Parrot.

I do not think she would have waited to attack either of

us, but instinctively I pulled my revolver and fired. The bullet took her fair in the lower jaw, and made a terribly splintered wound; and then, with a savage growl of pain and wrath, she rose up and rushed straight at Billy, who seemingly had been too bewildered to fly.

I was "making tracks" for my friendly tree now, as hard as I could run, and C. yelled out to Billy—

"Here, Parrot, give us your hand, man. Look smart, you muff, or you'll be grabbed!"

Billy seemed for an instant to be undecided. C. had lain down, and was again trying to grasp Billy's hand. Billy's inches were, however, too few; he could not reach the friendly succouring clasp. All this passed much quicker than I can describe it.

Just at the last moment, all too late as it proved, Billy tried to flee. The hot breath of the infuriated bear was now on his cheek. He made a leap, but his foot caught in a vine, and down he went.

In an instant the savage growling brute was on top of him. Well it was for Billy now that my shot, after all, had caught the brute in the jaw.

A bear's fangs, let me tell you, are no child's toy. But the brute was powerless to bite.

Still they can lacerate a man terribly with their long, powerful black claws, with which they tear open the hardened ant-hills.

My heart was beating like a sledge hammer. By this time both C. and I had got our guns, but we could see nothing but a confused mass of fur and leggings. Billy, however, now seemed to be getting his "dander riz," as our Yankee friends would say.

I am sorry to say Billy was not a pious young man, he was swearing most horribly, and really concerned for his safety as we were, we could scarcely retain our gravity.

The bear had got him in a firm hug, and was rolling

over and over with him, growling most savagely, and smothering him with the blood that rushed from the broken jaw.

Billy's knowledge of the tricks of the wrestling ring, and his great strength, here now, however, stood him in good stead. His strong little bandy legs were twined, with a clutch like ivy, round the hind quarters of the bear, keeping it from tearing him with its hind claws. He had got his left elbow right under the bear's throat, a favourite wrestling trick of Billy's, keeping its mouth from his face, and with his right fist he was dealing the infuriated brute sounding blows in the face, the ribs, and over the snout, shouting like a madman all the while, and mingling Hindoo and marine oaths together, in the oddest and most laughable jumble imaginable.

I never saw such a sight, and, imminent as was the danger to our poor friend, I fairly roared with laughter. This seemed to rouse Billy's ire worse than ever, and he began to expend a few of the vials of his wrath upon me. By this time, the whole of the party, attracted by the noise, were coming trooping to the spot.

The bear was a big powerful animal, and we began to note with concern, that in their struggles, the strangely but, after all, not unevenly matched combatants had rolled very near to the edge of the *khud*.

We shouted to Billy to apprise him of this new danger, but he was too excited, and too intent on administering punishment to his enemy, to catch the import of what we said. Over and over they rolled. They writhed and panted and struggled. Billy's grip was as unyielding as the bear's. For once the shaggy monster of the woods had encountered a hug fully as determined as his own.

You may imagine all this passed as quick as words can speak. There had been no time to do anything. The Doctor

was now tearing at a vigorous sapling; but a club was just as powerless in our hands as a knife or gun. We could get no chance to strike or shoot, for we might just as likely hurt Billy as the bear.

The growling savage was tearing at Billy's shoulders, cutting deeply into the flesh, as we could see. The cub had disappeared into the undergrowth. Billy was pommelling the bear, raining his blows with lustiest good will on the bleeding face of the maddened animal.

Over and over they rolled. They were now terribly near the edge of the *khud*.

"Oh, Heavens! he'll be killed," cried the Judge.

We were now seriously alarmed.

My ill-timed hilarity was now hushed, and a wild dread tugged at my heart-strings.

We were seemingly all actuated by a desperate impulse to save Billy at one and the same moment. We rushed forward, but all too late.

With a last defiant whoop from Billy, the interlocked combatants gave one lurch on the giddy edge of the deep, rocky precipice, and, as we rushed to the verge, we saw the black jumbled mass bound from an overhanging sharp-edged ledge of basalt, and rumblingly disappear down the gloomy shaded depths of the chasm.

I felt nearly sick. The Judge staggered up against a tree. For several moments none of us spoke.

"Good Heavens, it is awful!" said one of the barristers.

C. was the first to evince some decision of purpose.

Not one of us, I am certain, even expected to see poor Billy alive again.

"Let us get down," said C.

He whistled on a small silver whistle for some of the *syces* to come up, and we prepared to descend by the deer track I have already noted, to search for the mangled remains of our poor comrade.

When some of the men came up, C. ordered a spare elephant to be got as soon as possible; and then—a melancholy, moody, and silent party—we began the steep descent, each fearing the worst, and not daring to hope that the poor fellow had escaped a cruel death.

It was a wild, rugged spot. We were soon in a dense shade. Towering rocks raised their rugged bosses on either side. It was no easy task, and not unattended with danger, getting to the bottom of the *khud*.

Not one of us spoke. I do not think one of us exchanged a syllable as we clambered down. We were all too busy with our forebodings, and sick at heart with the fate of our companion.

At last we got to the bottom of the deep ravine, and slowly, and struggling amid shattered rocks, tenacious creepers, and prostrate forest trees, began our search up the gloomy hollow.

Already the news had spread among the beaters. It is amazing how quickly an alarm spreads among these wild hillmen. A knot of them were now tearing recklessly down the path by which we had descended, and their loud expressions of alarm and commiseration broke the silence.

I felt awfully sad at heart. I was reproaching myself with having brought the poor fellow with me, to act as a sort of butt; and my heart smote me as I thought how, if I had only aimed truer, or rushed in to help a little sooner, our poor comrade's life might have been spared.

C. was in front, making a desperate attempt to clamber over a huge boulder that lay right in the path. Dense matted jungle barred the way on every side. Behind this wall of jagged rock we expected to find the mangled body of poor Billy. It was impossible any one could fall from such a height and not be killed.

I hurried forward and tried to push C. up from behind. He was desperately tugging at a tuft of grass which grew

out of a cleft in the rock, when a sound smote on the stillness that caused me to stagger. My knees bent under me. C., who had been standing on my back with one foot, while like a cat he tried to find a foothold on the rock with the other, swayed like a ripe apple, and clutched still more desperately at the tuft of grass.

Again the sound!

Down I fell on my face. Down came C. on the top of me, and rolling over on to the Doctor, who was close behind, he communicated his motion to the Judge, and there we all went rolling down the scaur together. The natives, seeing us all rolling in a heap in this ludicrous manner, imagined the bear had attacked us again, and began swarming up the rocks and trees in all directions, and for a few minutes the gloomy cavernous-like bottom of the deep narrow *khud* resounded with noises like the pit of Tophet.

What in the name of thunder had caused all this commotion?

Only this!

On the other side of the great opposing rock, we could now distinctly hear, "Twanke diddle oh! Twanke diddle oh! Twanke diddle, iddle, iddle, oh!" crooned softly.

We leapt to our feet. "Hurrah!" we shouted, and then we hurrahed and shouted, and leapt about again, and generally behaved as if we had all suddenly gone mad.

There was no doubt about it; Billy had escaped as by a miracle, and there he was, giving us his jolly old chorus, albeit he gasped somewhat for breath, and seemed to be rather thick in the wind.

We soon got over the rock. The natives tore a way through the creepers and ferns; and we found Billy alive, but sorely torn and bruised, sitting on the mangled carcase of his late enemy, and though very shaky and faint, yet still full of pluck, and as eager for a "peg" as ever.

Poor Billy! He soon had a brimming soda and brandy

brought him, and then we learned the particulars of his unpremeditated and unprecedented fall.

As we looked up at the frowning crags, we could scarcely, even yet, reconcile his escape with the grim evidence of the fearful height he had fallen.

Yet, barring a terrible bruise on the thigh, and his torn and lacerated shoulders, he was sound in wind and limb. On examining the bear, we found that the whole of her ribs had been smashed in, as you would crush an egg-shell. She must have fallen on the jagged rock we saw from the top, and fortunately her body reached the earth first, and doubtless saved poor Billy from being smashed into a mangled heap. My pistol bullet had smashed her under jaw completely. My pistol was a Thomas's patent, and carried a large ball, but Billy's escape was, after all, simply miraculous.

Poor fellow, he bore all the pain of his removal with the most imperturbable nonchalance. Fortunately, the doctor was handy, and by the evening, Billy, propped up in a camp bed, with wraps and pillows at his back, was again able to give us his glorious chorus:

"Twankediddle oh, &c.,
He that loves good ale
Is a jolly good fellow."

* * * * * *

When I had finished my yarn, Pat proposed Billy's health, and we all did justice to the toast.

Poor Billy has long ago gone to the silent land of shadows. Peace to his ashes.

"Did you catch the cub?" asked Mac.

"Yes," I replied. "The beaters found it, and C. kept it for a long time and taught it many tricks. You know they are easily tamed."

Eventually, he got tired of it, and gave it to his bearer,

who, in turn, sold it to a travelling Caboolee, and my own bearer, *Chubbe Lall*, pointed out to me at Sonepore fair, last year, a dancing bear, which he stoutly affirmed was the same cub that we caught on that memorable day when Billy wrestled the mother and came off the victor.

These Indian sloth bears can be taught almost any tricks. They are very commonly led about by wandering showmen, principally Afghans, in this way, muzzled, from village to village, and go through a variety of antics to the great amusement of the children.

The keeper generally has a long cord affixed to the poor bear's snout, and as he jerks this, he intones in a sing-song nasal drawl—

"*Natchó, Bhalo; Natcho! Arree, Natcho! hah!*"

"Dance, my bear, dance!" &c.

Bhalo is the common name in Bengal for the bear, and they are really very tractable, and can be taught almost anything; but when wounded, or roused, as you have just seen by my story, they can become very dangerous and savage foes. I can further illustrate this.

At the time of the Prince of Wales's visit to India, I happened to be laid up with a severe illness, which necessitated constant nursing and medical attendance. The celebrated war correspondent, Archibald Forbes, and Mr. Henty, special correspondent of the *Standard*, were my brother's guests; and partly to make room for them, and also to be constantly near the doctor, I got a snug little private room in the fine General Hospital, out near the Cathedral, in Calcutta.

In the next room to me was a merry young fellow, a surveyor in the Indian Survey Department, and we soon struck up an intimacy. I was unable to leave my bed, but B. used to come in and beguile the tedium of my forced inaction. Poor fellow! His had been a terrible trial; he was all bandaged up, round the head and face, and for some

time it was painful to see him come in. At first I did not like to ask him what was the matter, but seeing my curiosity, he one day volunteered the information.

"You are wondering what I am bandaged up like this for," he said; "I'll tell you."

"Fact is, I've lost half my face, from an encounter with a bear."

My looks expressed the concern and curiosity I felt.

"Yes," continued B., "the brute has spoilt my beauty for me, but I had the satisfaction of killing the varmint."

Then he told me the particulars.

He had been out surveying in the hills, somewhere in the Nerbudda valley, I think it was; and his men had cut several lanes in the thick grass and underwood, for the purpose of his survey. One day, while peeping through his theodolite, an immense she-bear came calmly out into the cleared avenue, and stood placidly surveying *him*. To take sights of another kind was the work of an instant. Picking up his rifle, he sent a ball crashing in behind the shoulder of the bear, and the shaggy brute toppled over, seemingly shot dead. Very foolishly and incautiously, poor B. bounded forward exultantly to examine his prize. As he was turning the apparently dead beast over, she suddenly got up and fetched him a terrific clawing "wipe" across the face. The poor fellow's voice faltered when he told me this part of the story.

The whole of his right cheek, his lower eyelid, half of his lips and nostrils were clawed clean away.

With a trembling sob in his voice he added,—

"I wouldn't have minded much, old man, but I was just about to be married to the nicest little woman in the world, and she doesn't know anything about this, and I am afraid now to let her know."

Poor gallant fellow, he was too true a man to ask the girl

he dearly loved to wed a maimed and disfigured unfortunate, like himself.

But I may as well tell the sequel.

His men had got him to Jubbulpore, where the doctor did all for him that he could, and sent him down to Bombay. Here the stitching had all to be done over again, and the poor fellow nearly died from exhaustion and loss of blood.

His first thought had been of his promised bride, and he had begged his friends not to tell her of his terrible disfiguration.

Failing to get well in Bombay, he had now been some time in the Calcutta hospital as a private patient, and in a few days he was to undergo an operation, from which he had hopes he would emerge with some renewed promise of eventual recovery.

To be brief, the operation was performed. It was done by Sir Joseph Fayrer, I believe, with Dr. Ewart and others assisting, and was witnessed by the Duke of Sutherland, I remember, who came into my room to give me a kindly word in passing through. I daresay he thought I was one of the regular patients. I'm none the less grateful for his kindly meant courtesy. Remember I am only stating veritable facts.

The operation caused great stir at the time, and is in itself a wonderful tribute to the marvellous development of surgical skill at this stage of the world's history.

B. was supplied with a perfect new eyelid from a flap of skin taken from his brow. From the skin of his neck a new cheek was formed. From his throat a layer was dissected, twisted up, and formed into lips, and a new nostril was also fashioned for him from the same material.

It may please the sympathetic reader to know that the girl he loved so well stuck to him like a brick, and the last I heard of them was that they were happily married, and B. was—barring a few ugly scars, of course—very little the worse for his rude encounter with an Indian she-bear.

Now these are facts. There are, as I have already pointed out, some unbelieving and possibly vacant-minded individuals who think themselves awfully smart and knowing; they will not believe anything that falls beyond the range of their own narrow comprehension and restricted experience.

These are the men who sneer at all tiger stories, who openly flout every traveller as a romancer, and who are so wise in their own conceit, and so entrenched in their little petty circle of limited common-place experience, that they scout every man who happens to have seen a few strange adventures as an impostor, and laugh the laugh of scornful disbelief whenever the travelled man opens the wallet of his memory, and tells a few of his reminiscences.

Such conventional unbelievers remind me of a capital story of a well-known Australian colonist, who experienced a rebuff of the sort I refer to once, when he was home in England.

Our retired squatter, among other places in the old country, had paid a visit to see the beauties of the South of England, and found himself at Torquay on the occasion to which I refer.

It happened to be the weekly market day, and many of the neighbouring farmers had come into the market town. Our colonist found himself at dinner-table at the farmers' ordinary at one of the chief hotels, and sat down near the end of the table. Opposite to him sat a wizened old farmer, with cheeks like a winter apple, and with a keen look of bottled-up curiosity on his face.

The gentleman who sat at the other end of the table during dinner called to our friend, whom he knew as an Australian gentleman—

"Mr. So-and-so, the pleasure of a glass of wine with you," adding, "It is not every day we get a real live Australian amongst us."

This fired the little old farmer's curiosity.

With a look of mingled *bonhomie*, curiosity, and deference, he said—

"Be ye from Australia, sor?"

"Yes, I've just returned after an absence of thirty years."

"Foine country, be'ant it?"

"Well, I've got every reason to speak well of it, being enabled to retire from business."

"Ah!" there was a pause.

"What moight be the price of oxen out your way now?"

"Oh, I've seen them sold at £25 a head."

"Ah! fair price, that."

"Yes, and I've seen them sold at 5*s.* 6*d.*"—Sensation.

The old farmer seemed undecided. A short time elapsed. Then he returned to the charge.

"What might be the price of wedders now in Australy?"

Our "Waler" was equal to the occasion.

"I've seen them sold at 25*s.* apiece."

"Fair price!"

"Yes, and I've seen them sold at eighteenpence a dozen."

Still further sensation.

The old farmer stared aghast. The company were getting amused and interested.

The bluff old English yeoman was however not to be put down thus. He at length hazarded another question.

"What might be the size of your fields now in Australy?"

Our friend, having in his mind's eye a station on the "Downs," where five or six flocks of sheep could be seen depasturing from the verandah of his house, and to give the farmer a further idea of the size of the Downs, said, referring to a well-known mountain in Devonshire—

"Have you ever been to the top of Hey Tor?"

"Yes."

"And you can look upon two seas from the top, can't you?"

"Yes, maight be, on a foine day!"

"Well, *that's* the size of our fields."

The old man was thoroughly nonplussed. Our friend was as grave as a judge. The old fellow laid down his knife and fork, crammed his hat on his head, then he said slowly and deliberately—

"Thou beest the biggest liar ever God created."

He left the room amid roars of laughter, in which our friend heartily joined, and yet he uttered naught but unvarnished truth in his Australian information.

To my sneering unbelieving critics, who have twitted me with "drawing the long bow" in my hunting adventures, I commend the moral—

> "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in thy philosophy."

And also,—the world is bigger than a cheese plate.

CHAPTER VII.

NEVER TRUST A TIGER.

Exaggerated yarns—Man-eating tigers—An easy prey—"On the watch"—A common tragedy—"Mourning in some lowly hut"—The Pertaubgunj tiger—Shifting camp—An obstinate elephant—River-side scenery—Revolver practice—*Salamee*—Rapacity of servants—A halt—Enquiry—We form line—The beat—Elephants uneasy—The man-eater breaks cover—A tame termination—False security—"Look out, boys; it's alive!"—A dying effort and a costly bite—An instance of cool heroism—In the jaws of a tiger—A plucky rescue—Moral: "Never trust a tiger."

It must not be supposed that scenes of thrilling, I might almost say sensational excitement, such as I have been describing, are of frequent occurrence. These are the incidents that stand out prominently on memory's page, and when the conversation turns on hunting topics, it is naturally

> "The moving accidents, by flood and field,
> The hairbreadth 'scapes,"

that first present themselves, and are recounted

> "By the fitful watch-fire's gleam."

An Indian *shikar* expedition is indeed organised on such a scale of completeness, game of all kinds is so abundant, and a popular man in a good district, who knows how to utilise native assistance, can muster such an array of elephants, beaters, weapons and other indispensable accessories of the chase, that success more or less pronounced is almost inevitable; yet even then there are many blank days, and commonplace incidents, which are scarcely worthy of chronicle, and a

good deal of sameness is experienced, as day after day the beat for tiger progresses.

The most wonderful stories of tiger hunting are told by men who have had only occasional experience of the royal pastime; and the Griff, who has perhaps been only in at the death of a half-grown cub, and even then merely as a spectator, will, in course of time, and by a natural process of indulgence in imaginative retrospection, gradually invest the incident with a series of elaborate details, which do more honour to his powers of fiction than of sober unvarnished historical accuracy. It is from such men we hear the wondrous tales of gigantic man-eaters, measuring eleven and twelve feet from the point of the nose to the tip of the tail. Some would even fain continue the measurement backwards, and make out the animal to be twenty-four feet anything, to magnify their prowess and importance.

In reality, the tiger is not the audacious foolhardy animal the generality of tiger-stories pourtray. He is more commonly a cunning sneaking rogue, keen to perceive when the chances are against him, and ever mindful of the good old saw,—

> "He who fights and runs away,
> May live to fight another day."

As a rule, in heavy jungle, with a big line of elephants, the tiger will try to "make tracks," and slink away at the first intimation of a concerted movement against his customary haunt. A man-eater is in many cases an old brute, whose youthful vigour has fled, whose fangs have been worn down to the stump, whose active bounding agility has failed under the insidious attacks of the *edax rerum*, and who can no longer battle successfully with the fleet hog deer, the savage wild boar, or the wary nimble cattle of the jungly herds. By accident or design he discovers the fact that an unarmed human being falls an easier prey than the other animals he has been accustomed to hunt, and very possibly he finds a

collop from the *genus homo* to be as toothsome as his more natural and accustomed diet of venison, pork, or rump steak.

Nearly all man-eating tigers are old animals. Their skin is generally mangy; they are very cunning; will lie in wait near the village tracks; will stalk the unwary herdsman as a cat will stalk a hedge sparrow; they know the habits of the village population as minutely as does the tax-gatherer, and once they take up their quarters near a jungle village, they become indeed a terrible scourge.

It must be remembered too, that the habits of the villagers make the *rôle* of man-eater a peculiarly easy one, if once the unholy appetite for human flesh has been awakened. Ordinarily the village husbandman goes forth at early morn to till his patch of paddy, or tend his cattle in the tall growing jungle, and the men work singly or in little groups of twos and threes. The women, wending their way to the weekly bazaar, go forth, indeed, in a string, all chattering, laughing, and laden with the produce of their little garden patch, or small holding, for sale or barter. At the bazaar, however, some dispose of their wares more quickly than others; some have purchases to make, over which a deal of chaffering is indispensable. So it is that a few of the poor things find the swift twilight suddenly descend upon them when they are yet a weary dangerous mile or two from home. 'Tis then the cruel whiskered robber is on the watch. The hushed affrighted women hurry on, their hearts thudding with trepidation, and, as they hang on to each other's skirts, they cast uneasy startled glances into every bush, and start at every rustle in the tall feathery swaying grass.

Dogging every footstep, watching every movement, the silent hungry man-eater is crawling swiftly and noiselessly alongside the path. It is marvellous with what celerity and absolute silence such a huge animal can glide through close jungle. After all, they are but cats; they have all the proverbial attributes of the feline species, and not even a snake

can wind among the grass as softly and silently as the slouching man-eater hungering for human blood. The tragedy is indeed a common one in many of these villages. A basket gets overturned perhaps. A thorn enters the foot. The wretched loiterer must perforce linger a moment to pick up her little scattered purchases, adjust her dress, or stoops to extract the thorn from her foot. Then, with a swift silent bound—for the man-eater rarely betrays his presence by a roar—the fierce animal makes his awful onslaught on the terror-stricken hapless victim, and next morning a few scattered, crunched and mangled bones are the sole evidence of the ghastly tragedy that has been enacted. There is mourning in some lowly hut. A deeper dread settles on the haunted hamlet, but the daily routine must go on, and the daily wants must be supplied. The apathetic fatalistic doctrine resumes sway, and so the tale is repeated. In planting districts, the factory manager is generally apprised of the presence of the scourge, and in the end succeeds in adding another grisly skull to his collection ; but in the lonely, secluded parts of the country, a man-eating tiger is a very incarnation of destruction. No wonder that the cowering terror-stricken natives try to propitiate him by sacrifices and prayers. I have even known them withhold information as to his habits and whereabouts, from a superstitious dread, that they will thereby incur the hostility of their enemy, and bring upon themselves swift retribution.

Occasionally a few villages will combine, and organise a beat, and try to drive their grim oppressor from the neighbourhood. In such a case, badly equipped as are the peasantry, the chances are that a few are frightfully mauled, if not killed outright; and the vile brute may simply shift the scene of his operations to a neighbouring village, ere long to be back again, bolder and more bloodthirsty than ever. I have known whole tracts of fertile country allowed to relapse into untilled jungle, from the presence of a single man-eating

58636

tiger. I have seen villages entirely deserted from the same cause; and when we therefore heard that near the village of *Pertaubgunj* a man-eater had taken up his abode, and was levying his terrible blackmail on the terror-stricken inhabitants, it needed little incentive else, to make us determine to beat him up, and free the neighbourhood from his diabolic attentions.

Pertaubgunj was on the southern bank of the stream, and having made arrangements for a start early in the morning, we found that the dining tent had been struck when we awoke, and that the whole camp was enveloped in the confusion attendant on a change of quarters. Already the bullock drivers had brought up their patient, mild-eyed oxen, and while some were busily splicing the tattered frayed grass ropes that bind the sides of their primitive carts, others were oiling the axles and winding hemp and tow round the naves of the wheels. Already the coolies had packed up their pots and pans, had put away the cackling skinny poultry in hampers and baskets, and the whole camp was littered with tent pegs, *dhurries* or carpets, nets full of *Bhoosa* for the bullocks; and smouldering piles of ashes and damp straw on all hands showed where the servants' camp fires had been already used to cook the early morning meal of rice.

We had ample store of cold pastry and other *débris* of the previous night's dinner, and washed our cold refection down with fresh milk and hot coffee. Some of us preferred the more inviting glories of Bass, bottled by Hibbert or Stone, and it was yet grey dawn, and the fiery sun was still beneath the horizon when we mounted the pad elephants, and started off to ford the swift river, in quest of the most cruel and implacable foe of the poor Hindoo villager—the dreaded man-eating tiger.

Looking back over the level trampled plain, amid the thin wavy lines of clinging smoke and detached columns of mist, we could see the white tops of the sleeping tents one by one

sway and fall, and soon the noise of the bustling dismantled camp was left behind, and we jogged along towards the *ghat*. Reaching the miserable collection of boatmen's huts on the brink of the river, with the tall bamboo poles each flying a triangular tattered white rag by way of a pennon, to guide the traveller through the lonely jungle to the welcome ford—we found boats in readiness, and hastily piled up the pads and accoutrements on the largest of these, and were poled across.

It took some time to get all the elephants to take to the water, for the river was swift and deep, and the banks rotten and steep. One obstinate *Hatni*, or female elephant, indeed refused point blank to wet her feet, and had to be shoved in head over heels, *nolens volens*, by two stalwart policemen, in the shape of two of the mighty tuskers that carried howdahs. Eventually, however, all got across in safety. The village was some three miles from the *ghat*, and there was little cover on this side of the river. The banks were lined with a short stunted growth of *jowah* bushes, and beyond this lay a succession of undulating ridgy sandbanks, with deep reaches of back water from a former flood, intervening. The ground was nasty walking for elephants, being treacherous and full of quicksands. This caused the line to open out and straggle somewhat, and it was truly an Oriental sight, to see nearly thirty huge lumbering elephants toiling heavily over these ridges, plunging into the still bayou-looking lagoons, and, with the picturesque *puggrees*, bronzed naked skins, and polished spears of the natives, who were clinging to the ropes like so many great monkeys, the scene was altogether a striking one.

Beyond the sandy dunes, marking the site of the river bed and the limits of its flood waters, stretched an undulating expanse of rather lone country, pleasingly broken at intervals by clumps of mango trees, plantains or bamboos. Here and there a rude hamlet clustered round a dingy white temple,

whose cracked and crumbling dome and breached walls betokened very forcibly either the extreme poverty of the peasantry or their indifference to the ancient Pagan faith of their ancestors. In the far distance rose the dark shadowy line of the silent mysterious *Terai*, the brooding impenetrable forest belt that clothes the lower flanks of the mighty Himalayas, whose towering crests even now loomed weird and grand in the far-off haze, and gathered to themselves the floating vapours and mists of the plain; and as the sun rose, became enshrouded in an impenetrable veil of filmy clouds, that hid their snowy grandeur from our gaze.

Deeply embedded in one of the sandbanks, we came upon the rotting timbers of a hulking old river boat, one of the great lumbering structures that carry down the country produce of the border territory to the marts of Patna or Calcutta. The bleached and battered old hulk, after long years of traffic up and down the teeming Ganges, had here been cast high and dry in some impetuous flood, and now mouldered away into nothingness beside the frail tenements of an unknown fisherman's hamlet. The carcase of an overworked, worn-out bullock lay festering in the shade of the rotting ribs of the old unwieldy craft. And two mangy jackals snarled over the ghastly meal, disputing its possession with a bevy of horrid-looking vultures and common crows. On our approach, these unlovely scavengers stalked off to a safe distance, and one of the jackals gave utterance to his disapprobation by a prolonged demoniac howl, as if in protest at our intrusion. This seemed to give umbrage to Butty, who, drawing his revolver, commenced an ineffectual ball practice at the unmusical ghoul.

How quickly man's sense of emulation is roused. Butty's action seemed to actuate each of us with an itching desire to display his accuracy of aim and the merits of his six-shooter. For a few minutes a very hail of leaden pellets buzzed around the unlucky *geedur*, until a well-planted ball from George

settled his account, hushed his melody, and "cooked his hash" for ever.

As we neared the village we were met by several of the leading villagers, all of them seeming poverty-stricken, and having a depressed subdued hunted look about them betokening misery and an ever-present sense of insecurity and fear. A few trays of rather unsavoury-looking sweetmeats and some guavas and plantains were presented to us; and each head man presented a rupee in his open palm for us to touch, which we did. This is a very touching (I mean no pun), and an almost universal custom in these parts. Let a village be ever so poor, it is a point of honour with the head men to present "*salamee*," as the little tribute is called; and in many estates it forms a large item in the gross annual revenue. Now-a-days, the proffered rupee is generally only touched by the European visitor to whom it is brought, and the villager is allowed to retain it. In cases, unfortunately of too great frequency, where a *sahib* has rapacious and unscrupulous retainers, they generally contrive to secure the miserable coin of the poor ryot, under threat of using their influence with their masters adversely to the villagers' interests.

The rapacity and cruelty shown to the peasantry by these underlings and hangers-on is deplorable, and is a despicable trait in the character of these understrappers who hang about in the retinue or take service with the planter, civilian, or official in the East. It used formerly to be much more shameless than it is now. The planter, with his strong sense of fairness and scorn of meanness, has set his face against a continuance of these exactions, and many of the old feudal tributes of grain, poultry, goats, oil, and produce of various kinds, "*furmaish*," as they were called, are now discontinued. In estates under native superintendence, they are still extensively levied, but the general plan now is, to commute them into a money payment; and though the average rent of

land may be, in fact is, higher than formerly, I believe the peasantry are as a rule less harried and worried by these legalised extortioners than used to be the case.

All reforms come slowly, and when we consider the all-potent force of "*dustoor*," or custom, in the East, the intense conservatism of the people, their apathy and mutual distrust of each other, one can realise that even now much injustice is perpetrated, and much cruel oppression and extortion is practised. Still the general tendency on all indigo plantations is to bring the relations between ryot and landlord into a much more harmonious state, and to protect the former as much as possible from all undue interference, and extend to him kindly sympathy and support. The relations between planter and cultivator are, in fact, as far as is practicable, reduced to a strictly commercial footing, and though it will be years yet before all the old soreness disappears in many districts, it must be conceded that the European planter has perhaps done more to consolidate our empire in the East than many of our prejudiced Bureaucrats would allow.

However, this is too wide a subject for me to enter into exhaustively here; suffice it to say, that in the present instance our advent was joyfully hailed as that of friendly deliverers, bent on ridding the villagers of a dreaded and deadly foe.

Joe called a halt, and the pad elephants gathering round the one on which he was seated, we held a council of war and interrogated the *jhet ryot* (head man) of the village as to the whereabouts of the man-eating tiger.

We could get little precise information out of him. He was rather a stupid fellow, and displayed a more than usual amount of ingenuity in skirmishing round a question, and giving vague, highly coloured, imaginative answers. Happily for the temper of our chief, the village *chowkeydar*—a stalwart young *gwallah* (the cowherd caste)—came to the rescue, and informed us that an old man, a grass cutter, had been carried

off only recently, and he believed he could guide us to the very spot which the tiger was then supposed to be frequenting.

He was accommodated with a perch at the back of Joe's howdah. The line was brought up. We clambered into our howdahs—examined our guns—took a pull at the water bottles, and were soon marching down in stately array upon the supposed haunt of the evil-reputed brute who had long been holding the trembling villagers in terror, and we determined, as we heard of all his ravages and of the many victims he had struck down, that we would settle the score with him to the full, if we were lucky enough to encounter him.

We swept round the village in line, and noticed with pity the untilled appearance of many of the fields; many of the rice *khets* were fast relapsing into jungle. The cow-houses were ruinous, and the granaries rickety and ominously empty-looking. The children even seemed to have a scared look, as if a dead weight was on their spirits, and the whole aspect of the place betokened desolation and decay.

Our guide, now leaving a likely-looking piece of jungle to the right, directed our line on to a wide level expanse of green *patair* jungle, with here and there a trodden-down patch of scrubby elephant grass. In fact, the place looked as if it would not afford cover for a boar, and Joe, turning, again asked the man if he were sure he was not misleading us.

"*Bagh oos pur hy khodawand!*" said the *chowkeydar*. "The tiger is over there, my lord!" and he pointed to a small patch of dog-rose jungle, on the far side of a sluggish shallow *nullah* or creek, which was now almost dry.

Just then one of the elephants began to show symptoms of unsteadiness, and the feeling seemed to be communicated by some mysterious magnetic sympathy to the rest of the sagacious animals. Their trunks were uplifted and curled high above their heads. The *mahouts* had to urge them on and apply the goad rather forcibly.

Some began rocking and shuffling the fore-feet backwards and forwards uneasily. This is a sure sign of the vicinity of tiger. The experienced elephants had evidently scented the taint of the man-eater. Several began to make a low rumbling sound from their insides.

My *mahout* whispered to me, "There is certainly a tiger here, sir."

We were inclined to be incredulous. There scarce seemed to be cover enough for a cat, let alone a tiger.

We were now close up to the clump of bushes, still, however, on the near side of the *nullah*, when one of the elephants gave a shrill trumpet, and as if by preconcerted arrangement, forth sprang a long gaunt mangy-looking tiger, and proceeded to lob leisurely along the plain. He came forth so calmly and quietly, that for a minute we doubted the evidence of our eyesight.

But there he was sure enough—a great hulking unsightly brute. We were now all excitement. Joe's rifle rang out a challenge first, and immediate on the report the others answered along the line.

The tiger dropped. Not a kick—not a roar—not a quiver. It was about the tamest thing I had ever been at. Was the brute only shamming? These old man-eaters are very cunning. Was this only a ruse to delude us? to lure us within charging distance?

Not a bit of it. No playing 'possum here. The dark blood was already welling out in a crimson stream from a round little hole behind the powerful fore-arm. The dreaded man-eater was dead.

"What a beastly sell," muttered Pat.

"A regular cur," snapped Mac, whose bullet had flown wide of the mark.

"The skin's not worth having," said Joe, and so on all through the gamut of disgust, disappointment, and wondering speculation.

Vincent Brooks, Day & Son. Lith.

Death of the man eater.

We were soon collected in a circle, gazing down at the prostrate man-eater. No more now would the village maiden tremble as she hurried back from the bazaar. No more now would the tottering old crone cower beside the dried cow-dung fire of a night, and hush the awed children into silence by telling of the dreaded man-eater.

The man-eater was dead.

Pat was the first to alight. He was riding an elephant but recently purchased by the Rajah, whose estates were administered by Mac, and wishing to accustom the animal to the sight and smell of a tiger, he called the *mahout* to gently urge his charge forward, close to the warm, bleeding carcase of the tiger.

One or two of us were already lolling back in our howdahs, charging our pipes preparatory to a whiff. Pat was now leaning over the prostrate foe, talking reassuringly to his elephant, who trembled and seemed rather dubious about its near proximity to such a formidable-looking dead cat.

All of a sudden, with a yell of absolute dismay, Pat howled out—

"Look out, boys—it's alive!" and fairly tumbled head over heels in his sudden bewilderment.

At the same moment, the dead tiger opened wide its greenish-yellow great cruel eyes, gave a convulsive gasp, which disclosed its grinning horrible fangs, and rolling over on its side, gasping and frothing blood and foam at the mouth, its great claws stretched out rigid and threatening, it got hold of the hapless elephant just above one of the toe-nails, and, with a dying effort, it sent its yellow fangs deep into the poor brute's foot.

The elephant screamed with anguish, the others piped shrilly. The *mahouts* yelled and jabbered like so many apes. In an instant the whole line was in wild commotion. The poor brute of an elephant, mad with pain, piped and screamed most piteously, and the driver, gathering up his legs as if the

tiger were upon him, yelled aloud in a mortal funk to his fathers and his gods to save his life.

It was all the work of an instant.

It was the last dying effort—the last supreme and crowning attempt at vengeance. But it was a costly bite.

The wound, although carefully washed and tended, inflamed, gangrene set in, and in three days the elephant was dead. It cost us each three hundred rupees to make up the loss, as we could not allow the owner to suffer for our sport.

The moral is—never trust even a dead tiger. Or rather, more strictly speaking, a seemingly dead one. It was a dear lesson to learn, but it was a salutary one. In all my after experiences, out large game shooting, I first made very certain my quarry was really dead, before I would allow man or beast belonging to me to approach within yards of it.

Innumerable instances might be cited of the absolute folly of trusting to appearances with seemingly dead tigers. Their vitality is marvellous. Their cunning is no less most dangerous. I have seen them hide down as flat as a hare in even light cover, and allow a whole line of elephants to tread leisurely almost over their bodies, and then sneak off in the rear of the line.

A tiger is, in fact, gifted with all the wonderful adaptability to circumstances of his prototype, the domestic cat, and as we have just seen, even at the last gasp his power for mischief is to be feared, and under every circumstance it is the height of foolhardiness to go near him until the question of his absolute death be put beyond a doubt.

But for this tragic ending, the whole affair would have been one of the tamest description. The brute showed no more fight than a half-starved mongrel before a bull terrier. I have been in at the death of a good many tigers of this sort. The best sport is given by your half-grown young cub, who has never experienced a reverse, and who will come down at

the charge, roaring like a fiend, whenever his royal privacy is intruded upon.

Old tigers as a rule, and especially man-eaters, are the veriest cowards when a bold front is shown, or when they see that the odds are against them.

It is no uncommon feat for a party of jungle herdsmen, armed only with their iron-bound *lathees*, or quarter-staves, to boldly show fight to the royal robber, and, by sheer pluck and gallant daring, beat him off from some member of their herd that he may have attacked. Too frequently, to be sure, some one or more of the number may pay dearly for their temerity, but it is an apt illustration of the fact that men get inured to a commonly incurred danger, and it seems also to illustrate the contention of those best acquainted with the personal prowess of the stalwart peasantry of India, that they are not the abject cravens those would make them out to be, who are only acquainted with the enervated, obsequious, emasculated dwellers in the towns, who possess much of the cunning, stealthy feline attributes of the tiger himself, without his dash, courage, and fierceness.

I recently came across an incident of cool heroism and bravery on the part of a few of our own kith and kin, which shows that the good old qualities of our race are not wholly wiped out yet, and which is such a capital illustration of the dangers of tiger shooting I have just been referring to, and the opportunities it affords for individual courage and daring, that it may fitly close this present chapter.

I extract the account from the narrative of an eye-witness (*Oriental Sporting Magazine* for June, 1879):—

"In February, 1858, my old chum, A. H., was riding back to his factory (Doorgapore) from Salgamcodea, when he met Ben T., who assured him a tiger (no leopard) had killed and eaten a girl, and severely wounded other people close in the Jowdeah village. As tigers had not been heard for many years there, they cautiously walked to the

There they saw, surely enough, an enormous tiger lying near the side of a native's hut, coolly sunning himself on a nice bed of straw.

"On this A. H. wrote off to Joradah to R. P. S. to come and bring Wm. S——ff with him. He also wrote to me, to Doolella, to canter over at once, and while he galloped back to Salgamoodea to get old T. K. and his elephant, he left Ben to watch the tiger, and keep the villagers from making a noise so as to disturb him.

"After about an hour or so, R. P. S. and Wm. S——ff arrived with the Joradah elephant, and not believing that a tiger could be there, but perhaps a leopard, they asked where the brute was, and on being shown a small piece of Putteal jungle not more than forty feet square, they got on their elephant and put him into it. A movement was noticed, but no Mr. Stripes showed. After a bit, the noble brute was seen some distance off, near the banks of the river, having slinked round some houses unperceived by the gentlemen.

"On their trying to near the tiger, he swam the river (the Coomar), and calmly walked across the opposite sand-bank, evidently not knowing what to do or where to go. To get the elephant across was a work of time, but when done, Mr. Stripes was seen to have made a turn, and was again facing to the river, at a place higher up than where he had previously crossed. After a little while he again took to the water, and while going up the bank a shot was fired, I think by R. P. S., which seemed to take effect, as the brute fell backward down the bank, but immediately recovering himself, he jumped up the crumbling bank and quietly lay down.

"Again the three sportsmen on the elephant recrossed the stream, and here R. P. S., fancying he had done for the tiger, descended, and without even reloading his discharged barrel, followed up close to the elephant.

"On approaching the place near which they knew the

tiger to be lying down, out jumped Stripes with a roar and made for the elephant. This was too much for the nerves of the stately pachyderm. He suddenly swung round, making it impossible for either Ben or Wm. S——ff to get even a snap shot, and bolted away as if the devil himself was at his heels.

"The tiger then seeing R. P. S. near the bank of the river, charged him, when R. P. S. jumped over the bank, but in an instant the tiger must have been on him, gripped him by the left thigh, threw him down on the very brink of the river, and then squatted down twenty yards off, higher up the bank, with his face turned from the wounded man.

"Now came the tug-of-war. Where was R. P. S.? He must be wounded, if not killed—if only the former, or under any circumstances, he must be released.

"But there are often brave men in these emergencies, and so it proved, for Wm. S——ff ordered the elephant to kneel down, when he and Ben T. got off, leaving the elephant; they collected two or three plucky natives, went down, and actually carried off their poor wounded comrade, while the tiger made not a movement.

"R. P. S. was awfully mauled on the left thigh, which, however, was not broken. Wm. S——ff then tore off his shirt, tied up the wound as best he could, and carried the nearly insensible R. P. S. off to Salgamoodea, that being the nearest place where European medical aid was procurable.

"Shortly afterwards A. H. and old T. K. came up upon the elephant, determined to do or die; but to make a long story short, the tiger, on seeing the *hathee*, charged nobly for fully sixty yards in the open, roaring as only a tiger can. He was, however, doomed, for he got a pill from both gentlemen, and, a second after, fell to rise no more, and their wounded comrade was amply avenged."

The narrator very pertinently asks, "How often, sir, would you hear of greater or cooler bravery than this?

Imagine a tiger (then believed to be wounded) lying twenty yards from a badly maimed friend, and see how many men will coolly go and relieve and carry off the wounded man!"

It is also added, "Of eleven men (natives) that the tiger wounded, four died shortly after."

Now this simple and truthful narrative illustrates one or two points which are of interest in discussing the nature of the tiger and the risks attendant on his destruction—

First. It is popularly supposed the tiger, like all of the cat tribe generally, will not take to the water. Nothing is more common than for them to do so, as I will presently show.

Second. *As a rule* he will not face a resolute body of men who advance boldly against him. To this there are exceptions, and this brings me to

Third. *Never* trust a tiger. *Always* reload in jungle shooting before you advance; and,

Fourth. Make proper arrangements and mature your plan of attack before you go on a tiger shooting expedition. It is too dangerous a game to trust to wayward luck or blind chance. Do not undervalue your foe. In many cases he will prove an absolute craven, and turn out to be an easily subdued antagonist; but if he is at all disposed to fight, the greatest glutton for excitement will be likely enough to have his most unbounded appetite amply satisfied.

CHAPTER VIII.

OLD TIMES.

The old well—The Fakeer—A pious old hermit—*Jogees*—Pagan cruelties—Peter the braggart—Soured by bad luck—Scotch Hindostanee—Peter pot valiant—His "teeger" story—An ignominious collapse—The real truth of the matter—The "Blue Devils"—Practical joking—The rough pioneer days—Police tortures — "Old Hulman Sahib"— A novel punishment—The old *régime* changed—Modern progress.

AFTER the death of the man-eater, described in my last chapter, and the unlucky accident to the *Hatnee,* we adjourned to the tents for bath and dinner. Our camp had been pitched in a very ancient and decidedly picturesque grove of tall mango trees. These were of an immense height, gnarled, knotted, and twisted. Scattered round the grove lay ruined heaps of carved masonry, evidences of former grandeur, and the site had evidently been that of one of the rude baronial fortresses in the times when the power of the Great Mogul had scarcely penetrated to these remote border tracts, near the great barrier line of the gloomy *Terai.* In one corner of the square enclosure, which was of considerable extent, yet stood a fine old well, constructed of solid masonry. Two uprights of hard *sal* wood supported a cross-beam, in the centre of which was a sort of a revolving drum windlass, with a stout rope rove round it, and from its grazed and worn appearance it was evident the villagers still used the well, as their forefathers for many generations had doubtless done before them. Beautiful ferns and mosses clung to its dank walls, draping it with a living tapestry of green, and overhead

a fine old fig-tree, with numberless tendrils and rootlets hanging pendant and swaying with every breath of wind, spread a welcome shade over the cool deep well, and formed a most pleasant covert from the fierce heat outside.

At another corner of the enclosure was a ruinous village temple, with a great stately tamarind tree rising behind it, and in a hollow in the mound forming the angle of the earth-work, embankment, or entrenchment, an anchorite had taken up his abode. He was a Fakeer, as they are called—men dedicated to some particular saint or god. Not unlike the mediæval mendicant monk, vowed to poverty, given to fasting, mortification of the flesh, penances and contemplation, but very frequently the biggest rascals and greatest hypocrites one could come across. Many of them are very fanatical. The Mussulman fakeers are especially so. But the Hindoo *jogee* is ordinarily a broken-down old party, who has tired of the world, and, eschewing its pomps and vanities, betakes him to some solitary retired spot, and there in calm contemplation, prayer, penance, and pious meditation, strives, poor Pagan, after his lights, to have communings with the great unknown, to draw nearer and nearer to the Deity, to have spiritual communion with the invisible. Who shall blame them? Poor withered old hulks many of them. I have often pitied them. For the screaming, abusive zealot or bigot who would greet you with a scowl of hatred, and ban you with curses if your shadow came between him and the sun, I never felt anything but a fierce reciprocation of his heathenish contempt and hate. But with many of the sylvan old hermits, placable, patient, resigned, mild-eyed patriarchs, I have often held long conversations, and have found really good, pious desires and patient endurance underlying the unprepossessing exterior. The *jogee* generally has his withered body daubed over with ashes and white and red clay. His long hempen-looking hair is matted and twisted into a great unsightly-looking coil round his head.

Only a small tattered rag surrounds his waist. That is all his clothing. He carries a tong-like iron instrument with which to extract a live coal from the fires of the villagers, a sign that he claims hospitality. He may often, too, have a worn-out old tiger skin and a rude drum or stringed instrument as travelling *impedimenta.*

Many of the biggest rascals and thieves of the country adopt the costume and wandering habits of the *jogee* for the purpose of plying their nefarious occupations. And indeed it is not only among our Pagan Hindoo brethren that we see rascality assuming the cloak of sanctity, and the devourer of the widows' and orphans' portions taking covert under the garb of religion. Not a few, however, of those Hindoo friars and hermits are really good, inoffensive, pious old fellows; and our old hermit here, close to our camp, was of the better of his class.

His story, as he related it to us before our tent, was an apt commentary on the care and trouble of life, and a practical illustration of the common ills that haunt the lives of the village dweller in these wild secluded tracts of country.

His name was Petumber. He did not say of what caste he was, but noticing the triple cord around his wasted shoulders, I set him down for a Brahmin or a Rajpoot. His father had been a rich man, owning a large extent of land in Chupra, near the big Gunduck, and had owned boats on the river, and was a man of substance. After his father's death, Petumber's evil luck seemed to have commenced. Bad season followed bad season. One after another the boats were lost on the river. He became involved in a lawsuit with his elder brother, and at the end of ten years he found himself a ruined man. Then he migrated down to Purneah, which was his wife's country, and here for a time he had struggled against ever accumulating misfortune. One of his sons (his eldest, a fine promising young man) had been

devoured by a tiger. Two had been drowned in the floods. His wife and several of his young children had been smitten down with cholera. His story was a true one. Surely here was a sad life. Surely here was a modern Job. Was the old man querulous, discontented, bitter? What a lesson he taught us. Never a murmur escaped his lips when we asked him, Had he much *afsos* (grief)? Was not his life a burden to him? Did he not consider he had had evil fortune? His reply was but this—

"*Hum kya kurre. Khoda ka haat mé hai.* What matter? What can I do? I am in God's hands."

Poor old hermit! Here was simple faith. His only creed, "whatever God wills is best."

And so he had become an ascetic. He had adopted the *jogees'* garb. The charity of the villagers supplied his simple wants. He was quite contented, and ready to go when he was called; as he expressed it—

"'*Jub wukht awe*
Tub hum jawe.'

When my time comes, I am ready to depart."

Very few speculations troubled the poor old fellow. 'Twas the simple primal belief in destiny. *Kismut*—What is, is; and what shall be, shall be. Withal, he was a cheerful, resigned, contented, old anchorite, and he seemingly commanded the most unfeigned respect of the villagers.

Some of these old *Jogees* are found attached to nearly every shrine in India. I have come across them in the most secluded and out-of-the-way nooks. They may be found in the heart of the gloomiest, densest jungle; their only living neighbours being hyenas, tigers, and other wild animals. I have heard innumerable stories of their familiarity with and contempt of danger from wild beasts, and the most improbable and apocryphal relations of their encounters, single-handed, with tigers and demons; and I knew of one case, near Jynugger, where one old fakeer was known to share his den

in the woods, near an old temple, with a full-grown young tiger.*

Of course he had tamed and trained the beast from its youth up, but the popular superstition and love of the marvellous invested the Jynugger Jogee with all sorts of supernatural attributes; and when the final catastrophe did come, it was believed all over the country side that the sainted man had gone to *Asman* (heaven) much in the same way as the prophet of old—in a chariot of fire, to wit; the real finish being that the tiger he had nurtured and tended, with a not uncommon ingratitude, had turned against the hand that fed it, and devoured its benefactor.

Such tragedies are not uncommon in these wild frontier districts. They are a long, long weary way yet from the fulness of the light. The dark clouds of superstition, ignorance, and horrid cruelty still obscure the light and battle with the dawn. Were I to detail some of the scenes of awful cruelty and heathenish horror that have come under my own observation, I would not be believed. I have seen poor mutilated women often in the Nepaul villages terribly scarred and disfigured, simply from a jealous outburst of devilish rage on the part of a brutal husband. I have known of many case of infanticide—fair infants cruelly done to death at the bidding of a fiendish heathen custom. Further on I may detail some of the inhuman cruelties practised by the police and the torturings by petty officials. In these dark regions, the most direful tragedies are enacted even now under the name of religion. At the present day, even while I write, witches are being stoned and beaten in hundreds of villages; offerings are being made to demons; and abominations are being perpetrated, before the very conception of which the soul shudders and the heart turns

* In connection with this, let the curious reader compare what Farrar, in his "Life of Christ," says in his chapter on John the Baptist, and which I read after the above was written.

sick, mostly, it is true, in native states and remote parts of the country where English officials are rarely seen.

And yet we have men who go into ecstacies over the purity and intellectual culture of the Hindoo faith, and also sneer at the religion of Jesus and the efforts of Christian men to dissipate the darkness.

There's nothing so easy in the world as to sneer. A sneer is the devil's favourite weapon. Men who sneer at *all* missionary effort are generally men who are utterly incapable of comprehending the missionary spirit. God knows, much missionary effort is misdirected, much zeal is frittered away, and much cause is given to the enemy to rejoice; but every one who has seen the patient, self-denying lives of the true Christian missionaries, as I have oft-times seen them, cannot but feel that in the vital religion of these men—the religion of love—the gospel message of peace and pardon from God to man—lies the only lever that will raise the sunken, degraded humanity of the heathen, and place it again on a level with the image of the Divine nature in which it was created.

But I may be accused of preaching; so let me hasten back to my sporting journal.

In the evening, our ranks were strengthened by the arrival of a neighbour of mine, whom I had only met a few times, but whose eccentricities were known to all of us.

Peter Macgilivray, as I will call him, was a real original. In the way of boasting, he was a very Bottom the weaver, and outrivalled Munchausen in the variety and marvellous nature of his achievements. He was of Highland origin, and when the barley-bree had thawed his icy Highland pride, he was wont to discourse to us about his ancestral glories and the ancient state of his "fowk," as he called his warlike and noble progenitors. A shrewd suspicion was indeed extant that Peter's birthplace was in a classic alley off the Gallowgate of Glasgow, where his father sold salt fish, tarry ropes,

and whiskey; but Peter bragged enough for any twenty Highland chieftains, and had a thirst for whiskey in quite a proportionate ratio,—that is to say, if it were supplied at any one else's expense but his own.

Poor Peter! he was a queer mixture of kindliness and meanness, of braggadocio and good-heartedness. In very truth, bad luck had soured his temper; and even if he had the will to be generous, he had not the wherewithal. He had a miserable factory on the right bank of the river, some four miles from my outwork of Fusseah, and the whole of his *ilaka*—that is, the country under his jurisdiction or in his occupation—was subject to destructive floods. Year after year, poor Peter sowed in hope, and year after year his hopes were regularly swept away by the greedy and implacable river. The rents from his rice villages and a few vats of indigo from the higher lands, just sufficed to keep him from being entirely swamped himself; but he was continually in difficulties—had the greatest trouble every year in getting his agents to grant him an outlay, and carry him on; and the consequence was that Peter was kept very close to his factory, seldom mixed with any of his fellow-planters, and in fact lived very much like a native.

My first introduction to Peter had been one night shortly after my arrival in the district, when I got belated in the jungles and claimed hospitality at Hanoomannugger for the night. Peter had made me as comfortable as his circumstances permitted, and on several occasions subsequently, having a mutual interest in the lands and rents of one or two villages lying between his *ilaka* and mine, we had been brought into contact.

At Joe's suggestion I had written to Peter, asking him over to dinner. He was well known to us all by repute, and we speedily made him at his ease.

At first, like all men who lead retired solitary lives and come little into contact with their fellow-men, Peter was inordi-

nately shy; but after he had swallowed a few "pegs," with which George plied him, his bashfulness began to disappear, and Peter bade fair to shine as a conversationalist. He spoke with a strong Highland accent, and his Hindostanee was flavoured with the very same pronounced Doric twang. Strange this pertinacious adherence to the broad vowel sound, which proclaims the countrymen of Burns, no matter where you may meet them or under what circumstances! The broad Scotch twang sticks to the kindly Scot, as the flavour of the peat reek clings to his whiskey, disguise it as you may with cloves, lemons, or any other vehicle whatever.

Peter, for instance, never spoke of tigers as tigers, but always as "teegurs." George had but the night previous been telling us a great "teegur" adventure in which Peter had figured not altogether as a hero, and both George and Mac were now leading diplomatically up to the subject, and were, vulgarly speaking, "stringing Peter on for a yarn."

Peter, under the influence of the whiskey, was thawing rapidly. The thicker his speech became, the more fearfully he rolled his r's, and his great broad face was now looming through the thick clouds of his tobacco smoke like a full moon in a fog.

"Aye, Georrge!" he was saying. "That was a michty kittle customer, thon teeger 'at we shot thegither."

"Hilloh, Peter! what was that?" we all shouted. "What's that about shooting a tiger?"

"Shoot a teeger?" hiccupped Peter, now quite pot valiant. "Man, I wad think no more of shooting a teeger than I wad think of shooting black game. Teegers, hoof!" Here Peter snorted in his contempt of such small game, and nearly rolled off his chair.

"Teegers!" snapping his fingers. "I wad na gie *that* for ony teeger that ever was whalped. Why, man, I hef shooted them on foot and on horseback; aye, and hef foucht with

them hand to hand too, mirover, as my goot freen Chorge here can tell you."

Here Joe took occasion to replenish Peter's tumbler, and hint to him that a narration of a tiger story would not be unwelcome to the "fellows," meaning Butty, Hudson, and myself.

"Weel, you see, Mowrie" (he twisted round my name till I thought he would have broken his jaw), "there was wan nicht 'at George and old Mac there cam up to my hoose, and there had been great cracking aboot a teeger that was pelieved to pe among the bamboos close to the bungalow, and I pelieve myself they were poth afraid to stay ootbye in the tents, and would rather pe with me in the hoose. But you will hear."

It would be impossible to do justice to the mingled cunning and drollery of Peter during this narrative. He seemed dimly conscious that the whiskey had shown somewhat of its potency, and at times a suspicion that we might be laughing at him would flash across his mind. He would pull up in the middle of a sentence in the most ludicrous manner, purse his lips, knit his brows, and look with superhuman gravity and fierceness at his tumbler—then the current of his recollections would resume its flow; he would chuckle, hiccup, smile blandly, albeit somewhat vacantly, and as he warmed to his story he acted out the incidents, and got quite excited and not a little muddy in the speech, while he rattled his r's and intensified his vowel sounds most energetically. It was indeed a comical sight. I cannot pretend to do aught than very tamely transcribe the gist of the narration. The reader will see how Peter's imagination got fired up as he began to picture to himself the scene he was describing.

"It wass geyan late at nicht when they cam to the door, an' I was in my pyjamas, and not expecting nopody at all; put of course I wass glad to see them—fery glad inteet! So

I cried oot to my pearer, 'Poy, pring pen the whiskey!' and he procht it pen. It wass the fery finest whiskey ever you tasted. Deed was't."

Now this was a fiction of the wildest sort on Peter's part. Poor devil, we knew he had not had a bottle of grog, except perhaps native toddy, inside the four walls of his bungalow for years, and the idea of Peter shouting forth in a lordly manner for unlimited whiskey, as if the contents of his cellar were unbounded, was whimsical enough.

However, he pursued his narration.

"I can stand whiskey. I hef been used to whiskey efer since I was that big" (holding two very unsteady hands slightly apart from each other). "I mind at my father's hoose that the fery dogs could drink whiskey if they wanted it. My father was——"

"But the tiger, Peter?"

"Oo, aye, the teeger. As I was sayin', there was a terrible teeger there that nicht, and when we wass all trinking at the whiskey—och, it was fine whiskey. My father was the fery finest chudge of whiskey in all the Hielants."

"But about the tiger, Peter?" again suggested Pat.

"Cot pless me, man, I'm comin' to the teeger" (hiccup), said Peter. "As I was sayin', the teeger came roaring up to the door, and Chorge and Mac were poth in a terrible fright. What with the fright and (hiccup) the whiskey together, they were not worth a farden."

"Did the brute actually charge at the door?" asked Butty.

"Charrrge! Charrrrge!" scornfully retorted Peter. "I tell you, man, it was enough to knock the house down. You could have heard the roaring and the noise and the growling for ten miles, aye, for twentee miles. There was Chorge on the top of the almirah, and Mac trying to get up on the punkah."

"But what did you do?"

"What tid I do? What would any Hielant chentleman

do? I took down my gun, and I opened the door, wide open, and there wass—what do you think? not wan teeger (hiccup), but two teegers, and they poth sprang clean upon me, but I put a pall through the prain of one, and kilt him tead on the spot."

"And what did you do with the other, Peter?" we asked.

"Wis the ozer," hiccupped Peter, now very drunk, "I knocked his prains out too."

"What, with another barrel?"

"Anoyer bar'rl—no, wis my fist."

"Hooch, man," continued Peter, waxing quite eloquent and excited, "I haf shot more teegers than you efer saw in your life. I can shoot teegers efery night I like from my verandah." And then he began to get very indistinct indeed. We could catch something about his father shooting teegers, and the teegers and whiskey and his father got terribly mixed, and just then in marched Peter's old bearer with a look of great disgust on his face. The old man walked up to his havering master, gave him a tremendous shaking, and upbraided him in no measured terms for making a beast of himself, and so the poor old tiger-slayer was ignominiously hauled off to bed.

Then we asked George was there any truth in Peter's yarn at all at all.

"The lying old reprobate," said George. "He's as funky of a tiger as he is of a cobra. Why, I don't believe he ever shot at a tiger in his life. For one thing, I don't think his old gun could go off, even if he were to try it. I know I would not like to be within a mile of him if it *did* go off."

"But did he really shoot a tiger?" I asked.

"No," responded George. "But the best part of the joke is, that to this day, Peter firmly believes that he *did* kill two tigers in the way he has related.

"Mac and I had been out shooting, and near Hanoomannugger we were lucky enough to stumble across two tigers—we

were in fact after florican at the time. But we managed to bag both tigers, after a long beat, and by the time we got them on the pad, it was getting late—we were far from camp, and we resolved to beat up Peter for the night. We had plenty of grog and stores on the tiffin elephant, and as soon as Peter knew we were well supplied, he was most demonstrative in his entreaties to stay.

"Well, the result was pretty much what you have seen. Peter got glorious—and Mac and I determined to have a lark with him. We had said nothing to him about the tigers, the pad elephant having come up behind us, and when we had got Peter very far gone, we sent out word to the mahouts to bring the tigers up to the verandah. This they did, and then at the preconcerted signal they came rushing in with wild cries, and swore there were tigers in the compound. We pretended to be very frightened. Mac got a gun shoved into Peter's hands. We bore him to the door between us. He let off the gun. I felled him with a rousing blow from a hard *tukeah* (pillow). He was too drunk to rise, and there we left him to come to his senses between the two tigers; and Peter firmly believes yet that he shot those two beasts, and is never tired of telling the yarn now when he has got a little touch of the cratur in him."

We all laughed heartily at George's explanation.

The reader must remember that in those days we were all rather wild, reckless fellows. Practical joking was inevitable when a few of us met, and not seeing each other sometimes for months, we were apt to kick up such a bobbery when we *did* meet, as earned us the name, among the garrison subs. and Calcutta quill drivers, of the "Blue Devils."

Even then, the old hands had stories of their younger days to tell which put all our wild achievements completely in the shade. There must have been awful orgies in the riotous old days, judging from the tales old planters used to tell; but *nous avons changé tout cela.* The young planters get married now,

and the ladies—God bless 'em—exert their usual refining humanising influence, and the *leel wallah*, or indigo planter, is now *comme il faut* in all the polite *convenances*, and his carriage and conversation are *sans peur et sans reproche.*

Some of the stories of the wild days that old Mac could tell, were thrilling enough in all conscience.

Old David C. once blew up a young civilian who was visiting his place—literally blew him up—and, more by good luck than good guidance, escaped killing him. He had a train of gunpowder laid actually right under the bed of the unfortunate deputy collector, and gave him such a hoist as I daresay he never again attained with all his subsequent promotion and elevation.

Another of the wild old bloods, Barney H., overpowered an artless young "griffin"—"new chum," as he would be called in Australia—with grog, and then put him to bed between the corpses of two poor dead coolies from one of the villages. He put a climax to the horror of the youngster in the morning, however, when he told him, between the paroxysms of his throbbing headache, that it was only a joke, and if he paid a couple of rupees each to the two widows, no more would be heard of the matter.

You should have seen the face of that youngster.

"What!" he gasped out, aghast with horror, "you—you—surely did not *kill* the men?"

"Oh, that's nothing," laughed Barney. "It was only done in a lark."

The youngster got into a palkee that afternoon, and set out for the station as hard as he could go, and never once thought of emulating Lot's wife.

Now all fresh young communities have such reminiscences and such stories of their early days. The rough and ready pioneers have their uses. By-and-by the wild bloods die out, and a more sedate generation succeed them, with different ways and ideas, and alas, alas, many a time and oft with

meaner vices and fewer noble and generous qualities. Eheu! it's the same old story—"The good old days will never come back." In fact, the qualities that command success in the pioneer are little needed by his successor, who lives under the reign of law and order; and the mistake lies in not recognising how each generation finds its special work cut out for it, and how qualities and fashions are irresistibly bound to change with circumstances.

I have heard as a fact that the manager of Seeraha, in the old times, in a fit of passion killed a table servant with his crutch. He was laid up at the time with the gout (the manager, I mean). The orgie was never interrupted for a moment. There the stark and stiff victim to blind rage lay on the floor, while the revel rout and the brimming champagne grew all the louder and flowed with all the more profusion, to show that the planters of the old-fashioned school "didn't care."

It was a favourite resort of the native police then, to torture witnesses into giving what evidence was necessary to support the oftentimes nefarious designs and false charges preferred before the Hakims or magistrates. One usual course to adopt was to hang up the unfortunate witness by the thumbs, with his toes just touching the ground, and extract a signature to a document from him in that way. Or they would bury him in an ant-heap, or press his toes between split bamboos, or burn red chillies under his nostrils until his nose and eyes would bleed again. Indeed in some remote parts of the country, and in some of the native states, such practices are not yet obsolete if report speaks truly.

My first manager, old *Hulman Sahib*, as the natives used to call him, had a happy ingenuity, wherein I must confess lay much of tiger-like ferocity, in dealing with recalcitrant *Assamees*. On one occasion he had been defied by two wealthy landholders in one of the factory villages, and for a long time they set his authority at defiance. At length, in

an evil moment for them, some of the factory myrmidons got hold of them, and they were brought before the great *Hulman Sahib* himself. The old planter well knew how dangerous it would be for his authority to rouse a feeling of sympathy with these men on the part of the villagers. Already the news had spread, and hundreds of cultivators from the villages were collected in the compound, only waiting to see what the Sahib would do. There was much disaffection just then in the villages. The exactions of the middlemen had become very grievous. The authority and prestige of the factory were in danger. The two captured men were, from the factory point of view, ringleaders of revolt and fomenters of sedition. From the villagers' point of view they were patriot leaders, village Hampdens, champions of popular rights and liberties. It must be so arranged that they shall be punished, and yet that no sympathy shall cling to them on account of their punishment.

Old H. was equal to the occasion. The two men were led out to the verandah. There were fully from 400 to 500 villagers assembled. Of course there were plenty of factory servants and peons also present. The old planter, after addressing the multitude on the enormity and heinousness of the offence laid to the charge of the two ryots, no less than contumacy, breach of agreement, repudiation of lawful authority, and all the rest of it, said he was not going to beat them. He wished to show them how gentle and paternal he would be; but he must mark his sense of just indignation in some way that all would understand, and so he would make the culprits punish each other. The assembled crowd looked on in wonderment to see what the *Sahib* would do. Their curiosity was excited, and so they held back to watch the development. This was just what the wily old planter had foreseen.

He next got the two poor fellows to stand back to back, and tied their top-knots very firmly together with fine gut.

The top-knot is an appendage held in much honour by the orthodox Hindoo, and to have it bound in this way was a great humiliation in itself. The two men, with strained scalps, were now back to back, erect and otherwise free. With truly devilish ingenuity, old H. now came, and up the nostrils of each he inserted a good pinch of the very strongest old Scotch snuff. What ensued was really laughable, but confoundedly cruel. The two poor wretches began to sneeze with might and main. At every convulsion they nearly tore each other's scalps off. They roared and writhed, and bobbed and sneezed. It was horribly painful to them, but it was too much for the assembled villagers. The Assamee has a keen sense of the ridiculous and a tiger-like touch of ferocity too. They keenly appreciate intellectual acuteness, and they could not but see how cleverly yet cruelly the old planter was paying out old scores. They shrieked with laughter. The charm of successful rebellion was gone. The would-be village Hampdens were covered with confusion and shame. They had become the laughing-stock of the district, and therewith became the most humble and obedient upholders of the old man's authority.

Such doings are no longer possible now. Indeed, the cloth is in danger of being cut almost too much the other way. Every village coolie now knows his rights, and is not slow to assert them. Roads intersect the country in all directions (I speak now of Behar generally); village schools exist in almost every hamlet; the law's delays are still costly and irksome, but there is little chance now for organized cruelty or oppression; and the planter, as a rule, especially in Tirhoot, is looked up to as a protector and benefactor, and a community of interests binds the village farmer and the planter in a pleasant friendly intercourse. This is so on the majority of indigo estates in Tirhoot and Chumparun.

In Purneah we were yet one or two steps farther back in the path of progress. We were yet in the patriarchal age,

and, at the time I speak of, if a planter was popular with the natives, as I may fairly say we generally were, he could wield enormous power. Such men as Joe, George, and others I could name, born and reared up in the district, knowing every Assamee's family for miles round, were perfect little kings in their own *dehaat*, and were in their own persons judge, jury, fountain of justice, protector, and everything else pertaining to rule and authority.

But, as I say, only these stories now remain, just like glacial boulders on some heathery hillside, to tell of an older epoch of disruption and violence. When I first became an indigo planter, there were only two ladies in the whole district. Now, the first article of furniture a young planter thinks of is a wife, if such a homely term can be applied to the highest ornament and the dearest blessing in a truly happy home. Men, too, are better educated; cultivation is more scientific; the wage and status of the cultivator are higher; communications are more widely extended and better; and altogether the old reign of rowdy violence and boisterous robust hospitality and rough-and-ready exercise of authority has passed away. Feudal custom has given way to the reign of law. Things are done constitutionally now, and with an approach to decency and order which would have been scouted as impossible and impracticable thirty or forty years ago.

I have been led further away by this digression than I intended, but in my next chapter I will describe how we slew the "grand grey boar"

"By Koosee's milky stream."

CHAPTER IX.

A CHAPTER ON "PIG-STICKIN'."

Getting under weigh—Tally-ho!—Game afoot—A cunning old tusker—One man down—At our wits' end—A *ghat* ahead—The boar is a "jinker"—A comical interlude—"Now's the chance"—First spear!—A desperate fight for life—Death of the boar—Eulogy on the sport—*The Queenslander* on Indian sports—"Hints to Hog Hunters" from *The Oriental Sporting Magazine.*

WHAT fox hunting is in the merry shires of England, what grouse shooting is on the heathery moors of Scotland, what kangaroo hunting is to the hardy bushmen of Australia, so is pig sticking to the Anglo-Indian planter, or to the bold, keen spirits that are to be found in every military cantonment in broad Hindostan. I know of no sport that gives greater enjoyment. The boar spear is the weapon *par excellence* of the finished Indian sportsman. It requires the coolest judgment, the most unfaltering nerve, the most consummate tact, a keen eye and unflinching courage, to face the fierce rush of an enraged tusker when he makes up his mind to fight; and, unless well-mounted and thoroughly self-confident, I pity the chicken-hearted tyro who essays to stop the gallant charge of a fighting boar at his spear's point, when the indomitable old grey jungly warrior, with tusks champing and bristles erect, comes tearing down with a snort of fury and defiance, determined to do or die.

Long, long ago, now, amid the tussocks, fern and spear-grass of the Canterbury back ranges in New Zealand, I have

"ridden pig," and pistolled them off horseback; but I never felt the fierce delight of the chase in perfection until I was initiated into the wild, conflicting emotions of a successful boar hunt in India, under the auspices of Paddy Hudson and Jamie McLeod, two of the finest sportsmen I ever heard utter the whoop of victory over the gallant grey boar, when they "dropped him in his tracks," and watched his unavailing struggles to "get home" and sheath his tusks in their panting steeds.

To be a successful pig-sticker, requires a rare combination of qualities, and many a time and oft, even the most gallant rider, true of heart, steady of hand and keen of eye, will find all his skill and courage unavailing, and is forced to sheer off before the determined charge of a fighting old grey boar.

Our elephants were fagged out rather, with recent long marches, and as they had some distance to go for *charra*—*i.e.* fodder—we determined to have an off-day at Pig. We were the more inclined to adopt such a course from hearing of the sad ravages made by numbers of them on the paddy fields of the poor villagers. On every hand we could see evidences of their destructive ravages; and while Mac and Peter went off to try for florican to the north of the village, the rest of us, having mounted our horses, and accompanied by a tatterdemalion mob of villagers, set out to the southward to beat up a likely patch of jungle, just beyond the surveyor's mound before mentioned.

Under the direction of Joe we divided our forces. Butty, myself, Young D., my assistant, a plucky little fellow and a capital rider, and our captain, took the side nearest the river, where the jungle abutted on the sand flats, quicksands and still lagoons of intercepted flood water, which I have already described. The other contingent consisted of George, Pat, and Tom H., who rode up just as we were about to begin the beat. Tom was an assistant then on one of the north Purneah factories, and hearing of our vicinity, had ridden over some

eight miles to exchange greetings and get the news of our *shikar*.

We were not long in getting under weigh. The villagers raised the usual caterwauling din, to the accompaniment of brittle thundering tomtom, screeching copper horns, and rattling instruments of the kettle-drum order, only ten times more discordant. Knowing by experience that the pigs would break cover far ahead, we rode slowly along, well in front of the line of beaters, and a wild tally-ho on the far left soon told us that game was afoot. The wild exhilarating whoop was quickly followed by our seeing three horsemen tearing madly along the plain after a black speck in the distance, and they were soon lost to view behind a rising undulation topped by a clump of *jowar*, the circling clouds of dust marking their speedy track.

We were just beginning to wonder if all the luck was to be on their side, when Joe espied a waving, rustling, zig-zag motion in the grass ahead, and in a low whisper he enjoined silence and circumspection.

"There's a sounder on ahead, boys," he whispered. "Don't press them. Give 'em rope. Let them break."

We were now all excitement. We waved our hands to let the beaters see there was quarry on ahead. This caused them to redouble their shouting and yelling, and they bawled and raised din enough to wake the Seven Sleepers. The crash of their "mingled din" seemed to impart a fixed resolve to the authors of those wavering and vacillating movements in the grass. The little porkers seemed to scatter in affright, while the zig-zag motion gave place to a steady forward rush, and soon with an angry "hoo hoo" of defiance, an enormous boar with gleaming tusks, followed by three sows and a few half-grown youngsters, broke like a rocket from the friendly cover and scattered over the plain in front.

Singling out the old boar, we were very soon in swift pursuit. The tusker was making for a ragged edge in the

plain, where the crumbling bank of a steep descent on to the plane of the river below, made riding almost impossible. His tactics showed the marvellous instinct of a sagacious animal. Had he kept to the level upland we must have very soon overhauled him. Had he gone right down to the hard sand below, we could have surrounded him. He was unwilling to face the yelling mob of beaters in the rear, and with the quick divination of a hunted beast he made for the one spot where he could most readily baffle pursuit, and where he stood the best chance of escape.

If my readers can imagine the scene, they will readily understand the posture of affairs. The rivers in India run mostly through flat alluvial plains, in which they quietly cut a channel, which during the rains is brimful, of a vast breadth, and the turbid mass of swiftly running water is almost of the same level as the surrounding plain. When the rains are over, however, the river contracts to a narrow stream of silver, in the middle of a great desolate, wide tract of sandy ridges and water-worn hollows, plentifully interspersed with rotting trunks of trees, small patches of tumbled drift and straggling jungle. The real flood-bank of the river is now perhaps miles away from the actual stream, and the river-bed is, in fact, a valley, some miles in breadth in places, confined between two ragged walls of shifting sand and crumbling mould, and along the base of this wall are generally a succession of these still lagoons to which I have more than once alluded, in which the village tame buffaloes love to wallow; where often the village fisherman finds a rich finny harvest, and which, in the cool misty mornings of December or January, are alive with teal or widgeon, wild duck, ibis, curlew, plover, and innumerable winged varieties of game.

The cunning old grey boar had headed direct for the extreme edge of this rotten, crumbling ground. Young D—— divined his tactics, and made for a rotten-looking

descent on to the sandy flats below. His footing, however, was unstable, as if he were treading on a loose heap of grain, and we on the top enjoyed a hearty grin as we watched D—— and his unlucky country-bred mare go tumbling head over heels in a perfect avalanche of dust and sand, until they rolled, unhurt, but choked and blinded, on the cool, crisp sand-bar below.

The pig was lobbing along leisurely in front of us. Now on the extreme edge of the bank, dodging among the half-uprooted tussocks of elephant-grass that hung over the bank, anon hidden from view as he dipped under the overhanging bank and raised the finely pulverised Indian river sand in a cloud behind him. Occasionally he would halt and grimly survey us with a cool, critical look and an angry tremble in his eye. D—— below kept shouting insulting threats at him, and occasionally had to make a wide *détour* to avoid one of those lagoons I have described. We were fairly circumvented. None of us were so foolhardy, or had so little respect for the safety of our lives, as to venture near the grisly fugitive on foot. We could not get our horses to go near the rotten edge of the bank, and we were fairly at our wits' end.

We rode leisurely along at some distance from the edge of the crumbling cliff, keeping parallel with the boar, and occasionally getting one of the *syces*, or running grooms, to heave a clod at his sullen majesty, just to keep his temper lively, or in the vain attempt to lure him from his admirably chosen line of retreat. He was too wary, however, to be tempted from his masterly position. But just then D—— shouted out—

"Look out, boys! there's a *ghat* on ahead;" and looking forward, sure enough, to our joy, we descried one of those cart-tracks worn down the face of the bank, and leading to a ford. The boar, too, seemed to discern that here was a dangerous pass, and still betraying a most marvellous under-

standing of the imminence of his peril and the only way to escape it, he suddenly turned sharp round, and doubling back, seemed once again to laugh at all our efforts to come up with him.

"Hang the brute!" said Joe. "He may jink us this way till nightfall. We *must* dislodge him somehow."

By this time the other contingent, having killed their boar, had rejoined our party, and there being a small *tattoo* or native pony, ridden by one of my native *tokedars*, Pat got off his horse, leapt on the *tat*, and rode close up to the brink of the rotten bank, shouting and brandishing his spear, and hurling all the execrations he could think of at the wary old boar.

Perhaps he (the boar) may have understood Pat's insinuations, and felt indignant at so much insult. Perhaps he disdained to fly from a Sahib mounted on a sorry-looking diminutive native pony. Perhaps he really thought he had an opportunity of turning the Philistines to flight in the person of the vituperative Pat, but, at any rate, his "dander was riz." Pat proved "a draw," and, with bristles erect, eyes flashing forth rage and spite, his tusks champing and his whole mind bent on ripping up Pat's miserable mount, he charged up the bank and came tearing down at the double on the venturesome Master Pat. It was comical to see our friend kick and struggle and spur the unfortunate *tat*. The pony didn't seem to see the adventure in the same light as his rider. He struggled with might and main to turn and flee. Paddy was as full of fight as a bulldog, and vigorously plied his spurs. The pony had a mouth as hard as a coupling chain, and tried all he knew to avoid facing the fierce-looking assailant that was now within a very few yards of him, grunting forth the most defiant challenge, such as only an enraged Indian boar can grunt. The saddle Pat bestrode, was one of those flimsy padded constructions dear to the native equestrian, and the girths were only knotted cords, which had been

patched up once and again, until it were difficult to tell how much of the original material now remained. The unwonted exertions of the generally somniferous *tat* proved too much for the textile strength of the belly band. It snapped. The boar was close on the pony. Away went Pat ignominiously over the rump of the recalcitrant steed. The saddle, or agglomeration of padded felts and cloths which did duty for that part of the equestrian furniture, went one way, and Pat went another. The pony, feeling himself free, gave vent to his relieved feelings in a spasmodic upheaval of the hinder portion of his frame, disclosing his hoofs to the startled gaze of us onlookers. Lucky also for Pat that he (the pony) gave utterance to a neigh of martial defiance. This served to rouse the warlike tendencies of the boar to tenfold fury, and with a concentrated grunt of rage he made straight after the retreating steed.

Now was my opportunity. Cutting in between the boar and the bank, I delivered a spear, that in my eagerness took him too high and far forward, and only made an ugly gash over his off fore shoulder. Joe followed me up and delivered a telling thrust in the loins; and now the boar, realising all his danger and roused to the utmost pitch of rage and fury, began charging right and left at every fresh assailant. All his cunning now was lost in his blind rage and eager desire to inflict an injury on his cruel enemies.

It is really a grand sight to see a boar at bay.

He disdains quarter.

If he is of the true fighting breed, he sets his heart as hard as a flint, and "drees his darg" without a sound. I have seen a boar fighting with a tiger. I have been in at the death of many a tawny monster. The true Bengal boar is a very Spartan. He disdains to utter sound or sob or sigh. When the fighting fever is on him, he is a very devil incarnate. He shows no quarter and he asks for none, and sad indeed is the plight of man or beast that forms a close

acquaintance with his sharp, unpitying tusks. They can cut as sharp and clean as a razor; and even the stately elephant prefers to give a wide berth to a grisly old grey boar when his fighting instincts are fairly aroused, and he determines to be the pursued no longer, but strikes a blow before he dies for vengeance and may be victory.

So it was now with our old boar. He was a true old jungly warrior. He had made his mind up now to fight. Yet even now his native cunning and generalship did not desert him. There was a small withered mango tree close by. Feeling that he had deserted his only stronghold, the friendly sheltering bank, he made straight for this tree, and planting his stern against its trunk, he prepared to do battle with all and sundry who wished to battle with him.

Pat by this time had got to his feet and beaten an ignominious and undignified retreat. Burning to distinguish himself and recover his lost laurels, he was the first to urge his steed down full tilt on the savage boar; but here for once the experienced pig-sticker was at fault, his over-eagerness defeated itself. He missed the boar, and the old grey warrior once again turned the tables on his foe, and got well home with his charge, inflicting a nasty, ugly, gaping wound on the stifle of the horse.

The thrust Joe had given him was now, however, becoming stiff and sore. He occasionally settled down on his haunches like a panting dog on a hot day, and my next spear took him fair in the spine, and very speedily the old boar was stark and stiff.

We beat back again for the coverts, and once more dividing our party, we were lucky in spearing five young boars before lunch. Every one of them fought well. These boars of the Koosee *Dyaras* are all plucky animals. Instances have been known in which they have even proved too much for the Royal Tiger himself. One of these encounters I myself once witnessed and will in a future chapter describe. But what

I want to impress on the reader is the fact that pig-sticking in India is no child's play. It demands every quality of a true sportsman. It taxes all the powers of a finished rider, and one of bold undaunted nerve, to come off victorious in the encounter. It is THE sport *par excellence* of the Indian jungles, and there never was a "rank duffer" yet on this earth who made a good pig-sticker. A man who is "good after Pig" could hold his own anywhere, whether after wild cattle on the pampas, out mustering on the salt bush country, or in the Australian scrubs and gullies, or over the stiff timbers and six footers of Leicestershire or Galway. In very truth I know no sport in all the world that calls for more varied exercise of pluck, judgment, forethought, quickness, resource, and all manly qualities than this same pig-sticking. I was rather amused then to read in that delightful paper the *Queenslander* some time ago, under the heading "The Savage Life," the following remarks on Indian sport, which, although in a certain sense doubtless true of some, is altogether inapplicable to the fierce and thrilling ardour that fires every vein as you feel your good steed bound under you, while you rally for the final burst after a fighting thirty-inch old grey boar. The quotation is as follows:—

"The self-reliance engendered by the constant wrestle with Nature in her silent wastes, which induces patient endurance of hardship, the fortitude to bear disappointment, and the intense enjoyment of success, is not a requisite in our Native Shikar. In India, the sportsman is enervated by the luxuries of the chase. He adds nothing to his moral fibre by successful warfare against the brute creation. Jungles teeming with pea-fowl and the smaller feathered game—where nilghai, spotted and hog deer crash through the undergrowth—in which the huge grey tusker grunts suspiciously as he grubs up his meal of roots—in which possibly the awful tiger has made a lair for his sleek consort

—afford excitement enough and to spare for the sportsman who finds his pleasure in fowling-piece and rifle. There is the requisite spice of danger, too, that lends excitement its keenest zest. But there are no higher excellences required of the hunter than that of shooting deftly at such game as offers. He is not called upon to measure his reason against the wary instincts and acute senses of his quarry, and to stake his chance of success upon his superior cunning. Far less is he called upon to extract the moderate provision necessary for existence from a wary conflict with pitiless elements. The Indian sportsman is housed in a commodious tent, waited upon by obsequious servants. His every want is foretold. Bottled beer and brandy pawnee cheer him after his day's fatigues. His bearer kneels to wash his feet as he lounges on a comfortable charpoy, indolently recalling the incidents of the day under the soothing influence of a cheroot. When he goes forth in the morning his head shikaree marshals the army of beaters, directing their movements with the one object of affording the Sahib the maximum of sport at the minimum of trouble. He is, in fact, the sultan for whose pleasure a subservient following are bound to find such amusement as the jungle affords. No doubt the pastime is glorious and the enjoyment great. But to such a one the subtle, the almost weird charm of what we have termed 'the savage life' is almost unknown, and with every appreciation of comfort, we are led to think he has failed to attain to a hunter's truest pleasures."

The writer has evidently never been out pig-sticking in a planting district, or tiger-shooting during the rains near the Terai, or black buck shooting in a remote corner of Oudh, or bear hunting in the Sonthal Pergunnahs, or leopard stalking in the sal jungles of Bhaugulpore, to say nothing of the ibex shooting on the Thian Shan, stalking Ovis Ammon or Thar or Harigul among the glorious hills near Cashmere, or mahseer fishing in Assam.

To give the reader, however, a graphic unvarnished account of this most famous and favourite of all Indian sports, I cannot, I think, do better than extract a capitally written article called "Hints to Hog Hunters," which appeared in the *Oriental Sporting Magazine* for November, 1873, and from a perusal of which a better idea can be formed of the nature of the sport than from reams of description giving details of individual encounters :—

"Whatever the strength of the party," says my unknown author, "not more than three riders should follow the same hog, as a large number will interfere with good sport, by being in each other's way, as well as by preventing the overmatched boar from showing his finest qualities as a fighter; it is when opposed singly, or by not more than two horsemen, that these qualities are displayed pre-eminently. Another rule equally good is, that when the hunter has the hog in his right front and within double spear's length, no other should attempt to come between them; and a third, still more important, is, that under no provocation or temptation should the spear be thrown at the hog. The breach of these rules entails half of the accidents which happen to both man and horse; while another source of wounds is the too great importance attached to the taking of the 'first spear,' which often renders horsemen too eager and reckless in the determination to draw first blood. It is well known that boars are far more savage and dangerous after feeling the first wound, and consequently more skill and daring are called for then than previously, when the principal object of the hunted beast has been to escape into some neighbouring covert; but while too great an eagerness for the coveted honour is to be avoided, that honour is well bestowed upon him who, by his bold and skilful riding, has first *not merely scratched* the wild hog's back, but buried deep in his side the glistening blade, since, after such an injury, the enraged animal seldom thinks more of escape, but only of revenge,

and thus his death becomes a certainty if the first spear be ably seconded by his companions.

"When the horseman can deliver his thrust with hand held low and rapidly dashed outwards from his side into the hog's ribs, the wound will not only prove mortal, but the spear can be easily withdrawn; but this can only be effected when the horse is racing alongside the hog; when the latter charges, the spear is usually driven deep down from his crest through his lungs, or somewhat further back, in which case the weapon cannot be readily extracted, but is often left standing in the body of the hog; and it is no uncommon sight to see a large one with two, three, or even more spears standing deep buried in his body, and yet charging desperately all who approach him, till, weak from loss of blood and feeling his strength gone, he gently subsides to the earth, without a sigh or groan.

"A touch on the spine with a keen spear will generally kill at once, and require no second thrust: the best places therefore to aim at are the ribs, the crest and the centre of the back. Beginners, it is notorious, frequently miss the charging boar through their over anxiety to inflict a severe wound, which induces them to raise too high the spear hand and so go over the animal's back; whereas in truth all that is called for is a quick eye to direct to the fatal part, the spear held low in a firm and steady hand: the speed of the steed and boar as they advance towards each other will do the rest. In the course of the chase, when an encounter is not imminent, the spear is balanced easily across the body, the right hand which holds it rests on the right thigh, and its fingers can if necessary aid those of the left which guides the horse; but when the hunted hog may be expected momentarily to turn and charge, the hand is slightly raised and projected forward from the body, the point of the weapon being some three feet from the ground, much of which is concealed by jungle of some sort. Pig-stickers require a strong

rather than a pretty seat on horseback; the more so since they will mount fresh or young horses totally devoid of any experience of cross-country work, and expect and make them do their work by a firm and exacting hand, rather than by a gentle and coaxing one; so that the vulgar saying of 'a rum 'un to look at but a good one to go,' may be frequently applied with justice to many individuals of their class.

"Dogs are not employed in either hunting out hogs or hunting them afterwards, as if good and courageous they would be soon killed, and their places could be supplied with difficulty and only at great expense; but if inferior and cautious, they are in the way of the horseman without lending him any assistance. The best beaters for all descriptions of jungle but thick forest, in which hogs are seldom looked for, are elephants; but when they cannot be obtained, men armed with long staves, and supplied with fireworks, rattles and kettle-drums, generally serve the purpose, though accidents among them must be anticipated, as hogs which have made up their minds not to face the open, cannot without difficulty and some danger be dislodged by beaters from their strongholds; in these cases a charge of snipe shot, applied from a moderate distance on a certain prominent part, will cause them almost invariably to move at once.

"The Wild Hog of India," pursues our author, and most Indian sportsmen will cordially endorse his remarks, "is acknowledged by experienced sportsmen to be the most courageous—one might almost say chivalrous—of all the numerous beasts of the chase to be found in the Peninsula, throughout almost every part whereof he may be met with, differing slightly according to the locality. Taking that of the plains of Bengal Proper as the best type of his race, he may be described as generally a nocturnal animal, possibly rather through compulsion than choice, as in spots not much disturbed by man he will be found resting and wallowing in the soft lowlands at all hours of the day, specially should

there happen to be water lying thereon. He is the first among wild animals to leave the coverts of an evening in search of food, and the last to return thereto the following morning. His favourite lairs are the banks of tanks, lakes, and water-courses overgrown with grass, reeds, or rushes, and shaded by overhanging trees. There he will prepare himself a dainty and luxurious couch by cutting down and stamping upon a sufficient quantity of the softest grass and leaves, and then with his snout gently raising the mass, and inserting his body, until a perfect little hut be formed impervious to sun and rain; in this, with his back to a thick bush of thorns, his snout to the outlet, he will devour up the juicy sugar cane, the ripening paddy, and the soft black mud of the neighbouring *jheel*, till the heavy crushing advance of a line of elephants, or haply more fortunate, the slanting rays of the setting sun penetrating the leafy shade, and the calls of the francolin shall wake him softly ere the light sinks behind the bank of the western clouds.

"The hog is essentially a gentleman of the old school, fond of society, grave and dignified, not prone to quarrel or attack, but when insulted (and his feelings of honour are exceedingly acute) he extorts an apology in the hasty flight of his aggressor, or, failing that, vents his injured feelings upon him in the most resolute and unflinching manner, no matter how strong or large that adversary may be; but having once prostrated him, he disdains generally to mutilate his foe, but tossing up his snout he looks around to see whether there be any willing to take up the quarrel again, and if none appear, trots off with a contented grunt and stiffly elevated tail.

"Hogs when very young are of a yellowish-brown colour, marked longitudinally with light-greyish stripes, which disappear after a few months, and leave them a dark-brown, up to two years of age or thereabouts; they then become black, and if in fine condition 'blue' black, and thus are heard

stories of desperate fighting 'blue boars,' which are nothing more than hogs in their prime and full strength, with an unusual amount of black bristles.

"With advancing age they become grey, and when very old are almost harmless. A well-grown boar measures from 36 to 38 inches in height. Not one in a thousand exceeds, and comparatively few attain that size.

"The head is comparatively lighter than that of the tame beast; it is armed in the lower jaws by tusks from three to four inches in length *outside* the jaw bone, but these tusks frequently grow to a much greater length, especially when those of the upper jaw, which are shorter and thicker, having been broken, permit them to curl over, supplying no longer the *hone*, on which they are kept sharp and of serviceable form; in the latter case the lower tusks become useless for attack and defence, and then sometimes the conscious animal may exhibit a disinclination for combat. His legs and feet are very *blood*-looking in appearance, and his tail, unlike that of his domesticated cousin, is invariably straight, and naturally tufted, but the tufts are often wanting in consequence of the defeated boar being occasionally *scalped* by his conqueror. The sows are much the same sort of animal, though smaller and lighter in build, and unprovided with tusks in either jaw; but an old one sometimes carries a tusk of one to two inches in length, quite enough to enable her to inflict a deep cut. The bristles in her crest and back are shorter and thinner than those of the boar, whose grow to the length of three or four inches.

"When wild hogs are numerous they may be met with in 'sounders,' or herds of from ten to thirty, or even more, in each of which one or more well-grown boars may be found; but in countries more disturbed, 'sounders' of six to ten will be more commonly seen. Boars are often solitary, or lie singly near the 'sounders' without associating with them, as is the case with certain bull elephants and buffaloes, and, like

such, these hogs are the fiercest, their tempers having been roused by expulsion from society.

"Wild hog are not only strong and courageous, but are extremely crafty and fleet. When first breaking covert and coming in view of his mounted enemies, he halts for a moment, takes a rapid glance at the state of affairs, *and often* either charges at once, or more probably, having made up his mind as to the line of country to be taken, goes off at such a pace that for the first few hundred yards the swiftest horses gain little on him. When he finds that his hunters are overhauling him, he tries to throw them off by either crossing suddenly, *when at full speed*—a very common practice with him—and then rapidly taking a very different course, or stopping in full career he avoids the spear by a quick turn to the right, and, wheeling round, *follows* the horse, and endeavours to inflict a wound behind. At such moments the spur must be plied vigorously to save the horse. In country much intersected by '*nullahs*' and dried water-courses, he will often, descending one of them, turn sharp to the right or left, or in jungly ground will suddenly halt and hide himself in the grass till the hunters have passed, and then dash off in some other direction. A hunted boar has been known to cast himself into the nest of another, rouse him up, and before the half-sleeping beast knew what had occurred, he found the hunters upon him, and to save his life has been driven into flight, while the intruder, with a grunt of satisfaction, turned into his comfortable quarters and, after recovering his wind, got into some heavy covert.

"Many hogs will charge immediately the horsemen overtake him; indeed, if the strong covert be distant, such will generally be the case, and his rush will be extremely rapid and sustained to some distance, if he escape the spear and follows the horse, which he will do with long bounds and angry grunts. Now and then a boar will altogether disdain flight,

or even when the sought-for jungle be gained, will slacken speed, turn, and at a trot increasing to his utmost speed will rush headlong to the attack; at such moments he is most dangerous, and his appearance as he advances, with every bristle in his body erect, his eyes flashing fire, the froth flying from his champing jaws and half-open mouth, is very imposing, and quick and steady must be the horse, and bold and experienced the rider, who will escape scatheless and victorious from the encounter. Such face-to-face meetings with tolerably fresh and large boars are to be avoided if possible, and may be judiciously, when two or three hunters are out; but the solitary horseman cannot always do so, and then this sport assumes its most dangerous and exciting character, for there is death in the meeting."

The above account is at once the most concise and truthful I have ever seen in print on the dangers incidental to pig-sticking. That the sport is dangerous enough I have had frequent opportunities of proving. I have had two friends of my own—young planters and bold riders, too—killed outright in the hunting field by wild hog, and another was so lamed that he had to throw up his appointment and go home, where, however, he eventually succumbed to the influence of his terrible wound. That the sport is exciting and irresistibly seductive to those who have gained some proficiency in handling the spear, is proved by its universal popularity all over India. Wherever a few sportsmen are to be found congregated together, pig-sticking is the favourite toast in that chosen land of teeming game; and it is, in my humble opinion, the field sport of all others that most combines the elements of all true sporting ardour and delight; calls forth the keenest exercise of all manly qualities, and so enthrals its votaries that all other sports seem tame and insignificant beside the incomparable glories of a rattle across country after a fleet grey boar, and a "tussle for first spear" with bold and generous kindred spirits.

Shortly after this our merry party broke up, and I had to return to the factory, to undergo a spell of hard work, although in such a glorious district for large game of all sorts, scarcely a day passed in which I did not find some adventure worthy of recording in my sporting journal.

CHAPTER X.

AN EXCITING NIGHT WATCH.

Belated at Fusseah—The old *Chowkeydar*—Searching for supper—The dilapidated bungalow—The *Gomastah's* news—Tigers close by—Proposal to sit up for a shot—Shooting from pits—Night scenes in the jungle—A silent watch—A misty figure through the gloom—A sudden roar—The challenge accepted—The plot thickens—The young tiger and the old boar—A death-struggle—Savage beasts in mortal conflict—Defiant to the last—Trophies of the night.

In my last chapter I incidentally mentioned that I had seen a fight between a boar and a tiger. Such stray encounters are far from uncommon, although rarely witnessed by any one in a position to note its incidents and thus be able to relate them afterwards. In the silent solitude of these remote wilds, where savage animals hold undisturbed sway, rare scenes of thrilling interest are constantly occurring. Tragedies are enacted that would startle even the most sluggish circulation into bounding excitement. The scenes in an Indian jungle, especially when the rapid twilight has given place to the dim, misty, mysterious night, are indeed indescribable.

Often in the morning one may come across the evidences of a death-struggle, a ghastly encounter, or a dear-bought victory, in the blood-stained and torn bushes and grass, the clawed and tossed up roots and earth, and often the crunched and shattered bones of some poor victim, that may have battled stoutly for his life against the midnight robber, or

been struck down swiftly and surely beneath the mighty paw of the great striped King of the jungles.

Sometimes, however, the tiger does not have it all his own way; I was once witness to the truth of this fact.

It was a memorable scene. I can never forget it. The occasion was on this wise. I had been down at Fusseah during *mahye*, or manufacture, taking note of the different processes, and had been delayed longer than I intended by the bursting of a press in the press-house. This was to some extent a serious matter, for I only expected to have a few presses in all, as most of my crop had been swamped by floods and incessant rains; and we were only expecting to fill one or two vats more, before we would have to conclude the manufacture entirely for the season, with a very poor return for all our year's labour and outlay. The rivers were all in high flood. The road through the jungles was in parts wholly submerged. My elephant had not yet returned from a village, to which it had taken my *Gomastah*, or headman, who had gone to report on the amount of plant there, still remaining to be cut. Altogether there seemed not the remotest prospect or possibility of my getting back to the head factory by daylight. There was no use grumbling. I resolved to make the best of a bad job, and remain at Fusseah for the night.

Unfortunately, in anticipation of the bad *mahye*, the whole of my *Belatee* stores—that is, tinned meats, tea, groceries, and such articles as are purchased in an English shop—had some time previously been sent to the head factory, and there was not an atom of provender of what are called "Europe or *Belatee* stores," about the place. The factory *chowkeydar*, old Jhanki Gope, that grizzled, wiry old veteran, who had been suspected in bygone times of having taken part in many a midnight foray on the herds of neighbouring villages, and who even now, if report spoke true, was not averse to a little moss-trooping work if the chances of discovery were remote, came up to me with solicitude in his eye and extreme deference

in his tone, to ask if my Highness would permit him to levy a contribution in kind from the *batan*, or cattle camp, close by.

Knowing from experience what a good purveyor Jhanki was, I signified my assent, and away went Jhanki with his blue *puggree* jauntily set on the side of his head, his "lyart locks" aggressively sticking up in all directions through its tattered folds, and swinging his ponderous iron-bound *lathee* vigorously around his head in the exuberance of his delight, as he scented a good Burra Khanna for himself in the requisition he was about to make. How Jhanki managed to persuade the *bataneeahs* I know not, but in a very short time after I had reclined my weary limbs on the rather dilapidated cane couch in the verandah, I was made aware of his presence by his tall figure looming through the gloom, as with beaming alacrity he informed me that he had procured provender for his *gureeb purwur*, or protector of the poor—meaning me. I found that Jhanki had brought two of the herdsmen with him, lusty picturesque fellows both, bearing a goodly supply of sweet luscious curdled milk, crisp *chupatees*, or griddle cakes, and a small pot of clotted cream, while the bleating of an impounded kid, dragged captive at the heels of the stalwart Jhanki, gave promise of grilled chops if "my soul longed after the flesh pots."

To tell the truth, I was quite ready for a good supper. I had had a long day's hard work, with little food, and of course, having had no intention to be away from my comfortable bungalow for the night when I started in the morning, had made no provision suitable to the circumstances in which I now found myself.

The factory buildings at Fusseah were dilapidated in the extreme. The river had several times during the previous rains swept over the whole *Kamât*, or home cultivation, and had even submerged the vats and the building itself in parts. No assistant lived there, and the place was about the dreariest

habitation for a white man that could be conceived. The thatch and tiles in places on the roof had fallen off, leaving the bamboo rafters exposed to rain and sun, and innumerable bats had effected a lodgment in the dark corners of the mildewed rooms, and were now darting backwards and forwards with their eerie, ghostly flight—in and out, in and out, with that weird, silent, zig-zag motion so suggestive of dilapidation, darkness, damp and melancholy.

I was glad therefore to have my rather gloomy thoughts interrupted by the advent of the three men, and bestowing a *bucksheesh*, gave the needful orders to have supper prepared by the *Gomastah's* servants. While the cooking operations were proceeding, I had time to chat with the herdsmen, who informed me that in some thick jungle between the factory and the *ghat*, they had reason to believe that two tigers had taken up their abode. Of course, with the usual Oriental hyperbole, they described the animals as being of gigantic dimensions, and of the most bloodthirsty dispositions. But having learned by bitter experience how much reliance was to be placed in such tales, I attached but little importance to their news. Presently, however, Debnarian Singh, the *Gomastah* himself, on his elephant, came clanking up to the factory with his report. He was accompanied by several villagers, all chattering and talking loudly, and from their excited conversation it was evident some unusual event had occurred. The *Gomastah* having alighted and made his salaam, I was soon put in possession of the *khubber*, *i.e.* news.

There could be no doubt that "tiger" were in the neighbourhood, for on coming across a *chucklah*—that is, a large open piece of cultivation near the factory, bordered by a belt of tall-growing and rather dense grass jungle—the returning party had come across signs of a recent "kill." In fact, the torn carcase of the cow was still bleeding and warm; and in the gathering gloom the keen-sighted villagers, who were all

practical huntsmen, had been able to see the *poonj*, *i.e.* tracks, of two tigers in the soft earth.

This was rather an uncommon circumstance, that two tigers should be present at a kill, but Debnarian Singh told me that there could be no doubt that it was a tigress and half-grown cub, which he had already marked down, but which, as he had not seen them for some days, he fancied had left the vicinity owing to the low-lying lands having become submerged. The floods had prevented him getting in any elephants to hunt them up, and the matter had been almost forgotten.

My supper being now nearly ready, we deferred further talk until after that important meal had been discussed.

I don't think I ever enjoyed a meal less. The surroundings were comfortless and dreary. The wretched outturn of my crop and the misadventure of the day in the press-house, had not tended to raise my spirits. The damp, dirty floor, and the miserable *charpoy*, or native truckle-bed, made of knotted strings, and which was the only apparent available resting-place for the night, were very different from the cosy bedstead and comfortable matted room of my snug bungalow, so that I shuddered inwardly at the prospect of having to spend a night in such a lonely and forbidding spot.

One gets so accustomed to comfortable, not to say luxurious, surroundings in the East, and so habituated to the attendance of the silent obsequious servants, who anticipate your slightest wish, that the very absence of my bearer I felt was quite a personal misfortune. Even my pipe after supper did not seem to smoke as well as usual, and I was fast getting into a desperate fit of the blues when Jhanki again came to the rescue by suggesting that I might be able to get a shot at pig or hog deer, as they were very numerous quite close to the factory, and in fact the *Gomastah* had two or three pits near by, dug for the purpose, in which he was accustomed to occasionally ensconce himself, and indulge in a luxury dear to

a middle-aged and rather adipose Indian sportsman, that of lying in wait for and killing his quarry at unawares, and which is known to the Anglo-Saxon as "pot-walloping." I never for a moment thought of sitting up for tiger, notwithstanding the reliable evidence of their presence I had just received. In the Koosee jungles, such foolhardiness is not common. In forest country, or even in rocky districts, it might not be so risky, but in these flat grassy plains the idea is seldom even entertained. Purneah is essentially the country of the lordly elephant and the big *battue*.

Of course I had my gun with me, and my cartridge-belt was full, and Jhanki's astute mind had conceived the idea, that if I *should* be fortunate enough to shoot anything, *he* would doubtless come in for a big share of the meat, and I daresay visions of roast pork or venison already floated before his excited imagination. However, anything was better than the cold, creepy sensations which were stealing over me; and as the *Gomastah* volunteered to go with me, I determined for the first time in my Indian career to try the novel experience of shooting from a deer-pit.

This mode of shooting is very commonly practised by the native shikarees in these jungles. Indeed, where pig and deer are so numerous, the destruction by rooting up and tramping down is quite as great as that done by the animals feeding on the crops, and consequently the village watchers seek to gratify their love of sport, as well as protect their crops and furnish their larders, by shooting as many of the midnight four-footed marauders as they possibly can.

They select a spot generally near the edge of the jungle, some little distance from the tracks of the pig or deer or such animals as frequent their fields, and here they form a shallow pit some two or three feet deep, the earth from which they dispose of in the shape of sloping breastwork all round. To guard against a possible surprise from the rear—for tigers of course are very numerous where other game is so plentiful—they

commonly stick some strong prickly branches of acacia or Bher or other barbed jungle bushes on the side nearest the cover. If they are of a particularly luxurious disposition, they line the inside of the pit with warm, dry rice straw; and stout, elderly well-to-do pot-hunters even go the length of taking a small cane *morah*, or stool, to sit on, and thus avoid getting cramped during the long, weary wait which often ensues before they get a chance of "a pot shot." The sportsman's head being thus only some two feet or a foot and a half, or even less, above the level of the ground, and the space in front being clear and open, any animal, as big even as a jackal, coming between the level of his eye and the sky-line in front, affords an easy mark, while he himself remains *perdu* and partly protected.

If the wind be favourable, the chances of a shot are not at all bad, and sometimes the patient watcher is rewarded by bagging several of the jungly depredators who do so much damage to his crops.

To such a pit, then, I was conducted by my swarthy blue-puggaree'd guide. He had the forethought and consideration to take a *morah* with him, and finding there was room in the pit for the two of us, I made myself as comfortable as I could while Jhanki huddled himself up in very small space behind me.

The *Gomastah*, who was himself a keen sportsman, occupied a similar coign of vantage a little distance to the right.

It was now nearly ten o'clock. The watery crescent moon struggled with fitful, evanescent gleams amid the humid, tumbled waste of formless cloud. Here and there a sickly solitary star peeped timorously through a watery aperture in the sky, which again quickly closed as the clouds surged and floated slowly across the face of the heavens. Far away one could hear the ceaseless mysterious swish of the swift river rolling its turbid flood down to mingle with the mighty

Ganges in the distant valley which is the teeming cradle of the Hindoo race.

A quivering, long-drawn, pulsating sigh seemed to be wafted at intervals across the dark, misty plain in front, as the cold night breeze swept through the feathery tops of the long jungle grass, and the bending stalks rustled and shivered and nodded their plumed heads together as if telling the secrets of Night's jealously guarded mystery to each other.

Ever and anon a Brahmany duck (*chuckwa*) calling to its mate, or the low, muffled tinkle of a cow-bell from some cattle camp in the jungle, would break the brooding silence. The sounds of distant tom-toms would beat in occasionally like a thudding pulse upon the still night air, and then all would die away again, and the deep silence brooded like a pall upon the whole scene. The atmosphere was heavy with the penetrating odour of the cattle-dung fires, burnt at every *Batan* all night, partly to scare off wild beasts, but quite as much to ward off the attacks of the ubiquitous hordes of mosquitoes which hover in clouds about the camps.

At such moments, one's whole past career passes swiftly in review before one's mental vision. I could not help feeling a sense of incongruity as I thought of my old college days, and what some of my old light-hearted comrades would say, could they see me half interred in a jungle pit in this far-away nook of India, with a semi-naked cowering old cattle lifter for my only companion.

Occasionally a soft, stealthy footfall would make itself barely perceptible to our strained sense of hearing, as an inquisitive jackal, or possibly a porcupine or mongoose, would creep near, trying to probe the secret of the gloom-enveloped shooting-pit. Once or twice a shadow had loomed above the skyline, and as often I had glanced along the barrel of my ready gun, but only to find that it was but a skulking jackal, and not game worthy to be the recipient of my bullet.

The nights by the river in such a damp jungly district

are always chilly, and the ground mists are very depressing, and although well wrapped up, my fingers were getting numb, and my senses dulled by the long stretch of watchful attention, when all of a sudden Jhanki gently touched my arm and whispered in my ear, so low that I could scarcely catch his accents, "*Dekko dine hath, Sahib*" (Look to the right, sir). I quickly but noiselessly turned my head in the direction indicated, and felt a thrill as I saw what seemed, in the misty grey shadows of the night, looming big and indistinct against the dull skyline, to be a great bulky mass, which Jhanki assured me in the same low whisper was a *burra soor*, or enormous boar.

The direction of the wind was such that he was all unaware of our presence. He was coming straight towards us, slouching along in a seemingly slovenly, unconcerned manner, stopping now and then to give a self-satisfied sort of grunt, and rooting with his great, strong, flexible snout at almost every step, whenever any juicy or succulent tit-bit seemed to invite his attention. He was apparently alone. Either his harem had satisfied their hunger and the ladies were reclining within the shelter of the tall grass, or he was possibly some sour Thersites, who scorned the solacements of matrimony, and preferred to take the field in solitary bachelorhood.

Just then a friendly puff seemed to clear a long slanting avenue in the leaden pall of cloud, and the *maidan*, or open ground in front, was lightened by a sickly, straggling gleam from the pale crescent moon, and objects became a little more distinct. I was just about taking a sight to cover the boar's brawny chest, when suddenly he struck an attitude, raised his head, and stood out clearer, sharper and well defined—a noble picture of unconscious grace. Ay! boar though he was, he was a noble-looking picture of massive strength.

For believe me, reader, a grand old fighting Bengal boar in his native jungle has a suggestiveness of power and strength about him which imparts to his mien a something

ich is not far short of downright dignity. Something had dently disturbed him.

What was it?

We were not allowed to wonder long, for from the jungle ne forth a sudden growling, prolonged roar, which told us more royal prey was afoot. The situation was becoming sting.

ki's clutch upon my arm was becoming tighter. I ear his quick, sharp breath as he hissed in my ear, *ai Khoda wund!*" (A tiger).

usker did not seem exceedingly alarmed. His attitude ed to say, "I fear no foe. I am monarch of my own omain, and I care not for the growl even of a tiger."

Lowering his head with an angry toss, he gave a loud and savage grunt—a deep "hoo! hoo!" as if taking up the challenge and defying the tiger to do his worst.

Evidently the plot *was* thickening. And now I became witness of such a scene as is only possible to witness in these wild jungles where savage brute life comes into conflict, kind with kind, where the most thrilling tragedies are being continually enacted.

As if accepting the grunt of the boar as a direct gage of battle, a louder roar from the jungle was the response, and forth into the arena, with a bound, came out a magnificently formed young male tiger, lashing his lean flanks with his angry tail, his moustachios bristling with rage, his lips retracted, showing his gleaming fangs, and the bushy hair round his throat and neck stiff like a great ruff round his fine fierce face, as he seemed determined to "force the fighting," and win the victory by a sudden *coup*.

Alas for the young tiger!

He was evidently unsophisticated, and not well versed in jungle attack. He had probably been accustomed to find such quarry as timorous deer or a poor stray heifer of the herd overcome with terror at the sound of his magnificent

roar. He may have witnessed the more wary but invariably successful onslaught of his ravenous dam upon every kind of four-footed beast in his native hunting-grounds. He was "out for the night." He was itching to win his spurs. The promptings of independent action were strong within him. He longed to be out of leading-strings, and wanted to kill his own quarry. And so like a young brave out after his first scalp, he roared defiance to all and sundry. The old grey boar he had stumbled on now, however, was a champion of just such another kidney, much to the young tiger's evident astonishment. Like the typical Irishman, "he was spoilin' for a fight," and amid the intense excitement of the scene it was really whimsical to observe the young tiger's sudden attitude of bewilderment. The old boar did not seem to mind the roar so very much as might have been anticipated. He actually repeated his "hoo! hoo!" only in a, if possible, more aggressive, insulting and defiant manner. Nay more, such was his temerity that he actually advanced with a short, sharp rush in the direction of the striped intruder.

I am sure that if the tiger could have retired then with any dignity, he would have been content to have cried "off" there and then. He evidently found that he had "woke up the wrong passenger," and that possibly for his first fight he had caught rather a "tartar"; and the boar seemed on his part to resent his intrusion as something which was not to be tolerated for an instant. This rash, presumptuous, intrusive bully, tiger or no tiger, must be taught to respect the rights of priority of possession.

Meantime Jhanki's eyes were almost starting out of his head with excitement, and I was so intent upon watching the curious scene now being rehearsed almost within reach, that for the moment I forgot all about my gun, and indeed luckily. For had we made a movement it is quite probable that the attention of either the tiger or the boar, or possibly

Vincent Brooks, Day & Son. Lith.

Jungle trophies. Skinning the tiger.

both, might have been drawn to the third party in this midnight scene, and it might have gone hard with either Jhanki or myself if they had chosen to attack us instead of each other.

However, the drama in real life being enacted so close before our eyes was too engrossing for us to think of the consequences.

Intently peering through the indistinct light, we eagerly watched the development of this strange *rencontre*.

The tiger was now crouching low, crawling stealthily round and round the boar, who changed front with every movement of his lithe and sinewy adversary, keeping his determined head and sharp, deadly tusks ever facing his stealthy and treacherous foe. The bristles of the boar's back were up at a light angle from the strong spine. The wedged-shaped head rested on the strong neck and thick rampart of muscular shoulder was bent low, and the whole attitude of the body betokened full alertness and angry resoluteness. In their circlings the two brutes were now nearer to each other and nearer to us, and thus we could mark every movement with greater precision. The tiger was now growling and showing his teeth; and all this, that takes such a time to tell, was but the work of a few short minutes. Crouching now still lower till he seemed almost flat on the ground, and gathering his sinewy limbs beneath his lithe, lean body, he suddenly startled the stillness with a loud roar, and quick as lightning sprang upon the boar.

For a brief minute the struggle was thrilling in its intense excitement.

With one swift, dexterous sweep of the strong, ready paw, the tiger fetched the boar a terrific slap right across the jaw, which made the strong beast reel; but with a hoarse grunt of resolute defiance, with two or three short, sharp digs of the strong head and neck, and swift cutting blows of the cruel, gashing tusks, he seemed to make a hole or two in the tiger's coat, marking it with more stripes than nature had ever

painted there; and presently both combatants were streaming with gore.

This was round number one.

The tiger had evidently got more than he bargained for.

Betting at present very even.

The tremendous buffet of the sharp claws had torn flesh and skin away from off the boar's cheek and forehead, leaving a great ugly flap hanging over his face and half blinding him.

But Master Stripes had not come off scathless. There were two or three ugly rips in his chest and neck, from which copious streams were flowing; and there was a troubled indecision about the sweep of his long tail which betokened a mind ill at ease, and seemed to say, "I wish I were well out of this."

The pig was now on his mettle.

With another hoarse grunt, he made straight for the tiger, who very dexterously eluded the charge, and lithe and quick as a cat after a mouse, doubled almost on itself, and alighted clean on the boar's back, inserting his teeth above the shoulders, tearing with his claws and biting out great mouthfuls of flesh from the quivering carcase of his maddened antagonist.

He seemed now to be having all the best of it.

So much so that the boar discreetly stumbled and fell forward, whether by accident or design I know not, but the effect was to bring the tiger clean over his head, sprawling clumsily on the ground. I almost shouted, "Aha, now you have him!" for the tables were turned.

Round number two.

Getting his fore feet on the tiger's prostrate carcase, the boar now gave two or three short, ripping gashes with the strong, white tusks, almost disembowelling his foe, and then exhausted seemingly by the effort, apparently giddy and sick, he staggered aside and lay down panting and champing his tusks, but still defiant, with his head to the foe.

This was round number three.

But the tiger, too, was sick—yea, sick unto death. The blood-letting had been too much for him. And now thinking that it was time for the interference of a third party, I let the two mutually disabled combatants have the contents of both my barrels, and we had the satisfaction presently of seeing the struggling limbs grow still, and knew that both were ours.

Such is a plain, bald narrative of one of the most unique and thrilling experiences of all my sporting career in India. It rarely happens to the fortunate lot of any hunter to be witness of such a desperate struggle between the fierce and powerful tiger and the gamest and pluckiest beast of the Indian jungle—a good old fighting grey boar.

CHAPTER XI.

POLICE RASCALITY.

The native village police then and now—The power of the *Daroga*—Exactions from the peasantry—My attitude to the police—The village jury system—My neighbour down the river—A bungalow of the olden time—The *chabutra*—Changed methods now of dealing with natives—Taking villages in lease—Measuring the new lands—Native disaffection—Police plottings—The *Dhaus*—A welcome visitor—Out with the doctor—Put up a tiger—A resultless beat—A day's general shooting—Events down the river—Cholera—Death in the lonely hut—Spies at work—A devilish plot—Concocting false evidence—A late call—Making a night of it—In the morning—Accused of murder—The arrest—Reserves his defence—The trial—Excitement in court—Appearances all against the planter—Turning the tables—The case breaks down—Discomfiture of the police.

I HAVE elsewhere spoken of the rapacity and the rascality of the Indian native police. Doubtless the spread of education and a more intimate knowledge of the Englishman's method of dealing out even-handed justice, has tended somewhat to minimise their powers of mischief, inasmuch as the villagers more accurately know the limits within which the policeman can legally exercise authority; and the ryot, too, is becoming more independent, knows his rights better, and is most tenacious of his privileges once he has acquired any.

But formerly the police *Darogah* was most commonly a petty tyrant, rejoicing in his almost unlimited power, oppressing, worrying, harassing, and maltreating the native whose rights and privileges he was supposed to protect; and in many instances it was well known to the cowed, submissive

natives that the police were in league with all the most notorious and bad characters within the district; in fact, police tyranny was an evil of such magnitude that it gradually led to an open revolt, and worked its own cure.

Now, when communications are so much better than they were, when magnificent roadways and railways reticulate the country in all directions—*i.e.* in the more settled parts of India—when the system of administration has become more organized and scientific, when every little hamlet can boast its *Patshala,* or village school; and more especially when a much stricter and better system of inspection and supervision is exercised by European officers, the police, although still far from immaculate, have become a well-trained and important body of officials, whose services are of great value in maintaining order, in assisting in the collection of rural statistics, and in performing most of the ordinary functions which every police force is expected to perform in civilized states.

At the time of which I speak, however, and in the wild Koosee district, where roads were almost unknown, and the only means of communication was on the backs of elephants or by the tedious and cumbrous method of river boats, the police were indeed "a law unto themselves." The head man of a police-station, called a *Daroga* or *Thannadar*, generally managed to surround himself with his own kinsmen, or at any rate with men of his own caste and of kindred proclivities; and as his post was generally an isolated one, no European inspector being able to visit him at all without his getting timely previous notice from satellites posted on all the leading lines of communication, he was able to lord it over the submissive villagers, with all the arrogance and harshness of a satrap, who is practically irresponsible for what he does.

He generally contrived to be on good terms with any leading man who would be likely to question his authority or dispute his power; but all the humble cultivators, the

industrious artisans, such as fishermen, potters, weavers, and other handicraftsmen, and the patient and thrifty tradesmen of the village, those who dealt in oil, grain, and country produce generally, were often made the victims of his greedy exactions, and were not unfrequently subjected to the most impudent extortions by the swaggering, rapacious robbers of the police *thanna*.

It was indeed dangerous to question their behests or to dispute their authority.

They were adepts in all the chicanery of the law courts, experts in the manufacture of evidence, practised in getting up frivolous and fictitious charges; and naturally being armed with considerable authority by virtue of their official position, they made the most of it, and so exaggerated their powers that, in the minds of the credulous and ignorant peasantry, they were the very embodiment of English rule, and took good care to foster this belief by persecuting any unhappy wight who dared to quarrel with them; and in the country districts with which I was best acquainted, much of the opprobrium which was undoubtedly cast upon British rule and associated therewith, in the minds of the simple peasants, was directly traceable to the harsh exactions and rascally practices of these licensed extortioners—the Bengal village police.

Having myself been a victim more than once to their malicious ill-will, because I would not truckle to them, I may be suspected of speaking with some bias or prejudice against them. Any reference, however, to official reports of fifteen or twenty years ago, will show that I am speaking but the bare truth, when I say that the native police were corrupt almost to a man, and that the system, however perfect it may have appeared theoretically, and however difficult it may have been to devise any other suited to the times, was still a vast engine of oppression and terrorism, and was rotten to the core.

I could cite hundreds of instances where the most diabolical tortures were practised on unhappy villagers, who were taken from their homes to the *thanna*, and there subjected to unheard-of cruelties on purpose to extort money or goods from them. The police were "up to every move" to stifle adverse evidence, and many a mysterious disappearance of a witness who could give evidence against them, has been directly traced to their malign ingenuity.

It was almost hopeless in the conduct of a large factory, where daily and hourly one had to come in contact with the natives in every department of buying and selling, of leasing or exchanging land, of contracting for carriage, for forage, or for service—of arranging forest or fishery or ferry dues—of laying out roads and embankments, of settling villages, digging wells, planting orchards, and all the multifarious complexities of land and village management in the East, without first of all securing by fair means or foul the good-will and assistance of the police. Such was the general idea.

The least troublesome method was to pay the *Daroga* a recognised blackmail. Do not our own blue-coated truncheon-wielders get their Christmas-box? But the Bengalee "Bobby" was not satisfied with annual vails. For even then his airs and insolence were sometimes so exasperating that some dispute would of a certainty arise; and if once you incurred the hostility of this petty despot, he found a thousand and one ingenious means of irritating and obstructing you in your work, and of exciting you to some overt act which he would twist somehow to his own advantage.

Of course all the criminal classes were at his beck and call. Every *budmash* in your district would act responsive to his nod. Your *bunds* might be cut, your cattle stolen, or ploughmen or factory servants maltreated, or your granaries broken into, and even your crops cut by night, and your best village friends looted, and unless you were a man of

resource and acted with a high hand, so as to make the police feel that you had a long arm and could fight for your own hand, like Hal o' the Wynd, you would find yourself "in sorry case." Indeed, for years before I took charge of Lutchmepore, the police had been allowed to have pretty much their own way in everything. Large sums of money had been paid by the factory to the head man; and the common constables, in their peregrinations, had been accustomed to come into the factory and take goats or fowls or rice or whatever their greedy souls desired.

Having gained my planting experience in Tirhoot, where the planters were a united and powerful body, where road communications were as perfect as they could have been in any of the finest Roman Provinces of olden time, I was not inclined to tamely submit to the insolent exactions of these uniformed scoundrels; and it was not long ere I became fully aware that I was an object of their ill-will and evil machinations.

My example, too, of independence had become contagious. Many of the native land-holders and wealthy residents had become heartsick of the tyranny which was daily practised by these men and their myrmidons, and so when I had soundly thrashed two or three who had been insolent to me, and successfully contested one or two false cases which they had brought against me, the spirit of revolt spread quickly through the villages; and after my first year in Lutchmepore, by kind and generous treatment to all who came in contact with me, by acting with absolute fairness and justice in my adjudications between man and man, and by a liberal spirit of compromise exhibited in my rent assessments and the usual feudal services, I had won the confidence of the vast mass of the village residents, and instead of going, as was their wont, to the *thanna* with a bribe in their hands to gain the ear of the great man there, they preferred to come to me with their complaints, and I usually settled them in the old-fashioned Indian style by *Punchayiet*.

It may be interesting to digress for a moment to explain what is meant by the *Punchayiet*, or *panch* as it is commonly called. It really is to my mind the perfection of the jury system. The complainant first of all states his case generally —we will take for example a case of trespass, in which he claims damage to his growing crops from a neighbour whose buffaloes may have eaten and trampled a certain portion of the same.

Your first duty as a sort of patriarchal dispenser of justice is to summon the defendant. This is done by a formal letter, a *purwana*, taken by one of the factory *peons*, who receives from the loser in the suit, the sum of two or four annas as a sort of fee for serving the summons. At the stated time defendant and complainant appear at your *cutcherry*, and having stated the nature of the case before the assembled crowd—there always is a crowd around a planter's *cutcherry*—you ask the defendant to nominate two jurymen; and this he does, his nominations being subject to challenge by the complainant. If the two men he names, who are generally his friends, and as a rule respectable inhabitants of the same village, be not objected to, the complainant then nominates two on his part, to weigh the evidence in his interest. The planter then nominates a fifth, the *Panchmee* or fifth—*Punchayiet* meaning five jurors—who acts as a sort of president or chairman of this board of five—for that is what it really amounts to—and then the two parties to the suit produce their witnesses, and the whole company retire to the shade of some spreading peepul-tree, and there the case is heard and decided on its merits. If any one is nominated with a notorious leaning towards either complainant or defendant, the right of challenge is exercised, and at once disposes of him; and each member of the *Punchayiet*, being generally as has been said, a resident of the same hamlet, and knowing that at any moment he may be an interested party himself in a similar case, and knowing also every detail of the

locality and every point of traditional and local custom, their award is almost certain to be a reasonable and fair one. It is in fact a happy application of the principle of Local Self-Government. The disturbing influence of personal individual interest is effectively eliminated, all the proceedings taking place in the midst of their fellow-villagers; and in this ancient and primitive fashion, the ordinary disputes of an ordinary frontier Indian village are in the majority of cases amicably settled. In the meantime the planter can generally devote his attention to other pressing matters; and when one *Punchayiet* has been formed, it may often happen that all the petty cases of the day are submitted to its adjudication, and very rarely is it the case that there is any appeal from their awards.

Now, we self-complacent Anglo-Saxons are apt to pat ourselves on the back, and laud our wisdom in a great many very questionable institutions which we think are the *ne plus ultra* of perfection. We talk a good deal of our public spirit; we crow rather loudly about our calmly assumed superiority to these dull clods of Eastern ryots, but I doubt very much if, with all our boasted civilisation and superiority, a village *Punchayiet* in Northern Purneah is not infinitely superior in the despatch of business, in economy, and in practical utility to our much-vaunted jury system. To return now to our police.

I am about now to give an illustration of their audacity—of their *dangerous* audacity—their unscrupulousness and their vindictiveness, which at the time it happened made no small stir among the European community, and the effects of which, although I suppress the names, will be still fresh in the memory of many old Indian residents who may read these pages.

Down the river from my outwork Burgammah, and adjoining my *Ilaka*,—*i.e.* the territory over which I had jurisdiction,—was another large concern, which had been

worked by one of the early French settlers, a fine old hospitable Gaul, who had married, reared a family, and lived in the old Oriental patriarchal style, ruling his numberless villages with a mild, benignant sway, which endeared him to all the army of dependents and the many tenants who paid tribute to the factory in cash or kind.

The old dwelling, with its long-sloping red tiled roof, broad, low verandahs, upon which French windows opened from the dim, cool rooms, hung with heavy, fringed punkahs and crowded with ottomans, luxurious chairs, carved tables, and all the accumulation of quaint, old-fashioned furniture which is so characteristic of a real old factory bungalow in Bengal, spoke of comfort unbounded, hospitality unstinted, and a welcome "ever fresh and fair." Then there were the endless lines of stables, fowl-houses, servants' quarters and non-descript buildings of all kinds, swarming around the big bungalow like a cluster of bees around the queen of the hive; the delightful old pleasaunce of a garden, filled with rare flowering shrubs, or canopied here and there by enormous umbrageous tamarind trees; the masonry conduits bordering the devious paths, and the great cool, dripping well in the centre like a throbbing heart sending the life-giving fluid to the rich beds of plump, luscious vegetables, carefully tended by the old white-turbaned gardener and his numerous bronzed assistants; with its spacious *chabutra* in front of the stately sweep of the house—the two wings with their white columns flanking the massive bungalow on each side—the kindly, clean *chabutra,* with its pleasant associations, its stainless amplitude of smooth masonry raised above the ground to keep one from the damp earth—the hospitable, social *chabutra,* where guests used to sit sipping the old brown sherry, or the iced *bael* sherbet, or the seductive home-brewed milk-punch, handed by old feudal retainers in their picturesque Oriental garb; while the swish of the hand *punkahs* behind sent grateful waftings of air across one's heated brow,

scattering the delicious aroma of fine old manillas through the ambient air, when all round on the close-trimmed lawn would be seen the numberless four-footed home pets of the place, from stately stag-hound or brown-eyed beagle, down to brindled bull-pup and wiry terrier, constituting the "Sahib's *bobery* pack." Underneath the shady old mango trees too might be seen eight or ten stately elephants (each attended by his *grasscut*), slowly masticating their evening meal, and testifying by the lazy swish of trunk and tail, and occasional deep rumble of enjoyment, their unqualified satisfaction with their surroundings.

Such a scene might have been witnessed at any time during the "*ancien régime*," when the kindly old planter lived amongst his people, and never thought of visiting the far-off "city of palaces" and evil smells on the distant Hoogly, save perhaps once a year or once every two years, when he would take a run down to refurnish his cellars and square up accounts with his agents at the annual auction sales. But times have changed. The fierce competition and the somewhat sordid utilitarian spirit of the age has penetrated to these remote river valleys. No longer now do the patient ryots unhesitatingly acquiesce in the old patriarchal yet autocratic sway. They have learned their rights and are fully aware of their privileges. The rates for indigo are a matter for annual settlement now. Wages of labourers fluctuate as supply and demand fluctuates. The arrangements for the annual carriage of the crop by boat or bullock-cart, is now a matter requiring weeks of wearying diplomacy. Nay more, half your vats may lie empty of indigo unless the rate of your advances comes up to the anything but modest expectations of your needy cultivators. The modern institution of "the strike" is quite acclimatised in Bengal now. Beyond a doubt the position of the native has become ameliorated to an extent which is hardly credible, and which forms one of the brightest tributes to the beneficence

of English rule in India, let rabid, revolutionary, red-hot Republicans who malign and misrepresent British rule in the East say what they may. The position of the planter has not been improved in an equal degree or in any ratio at all commensurate with the general advance in material prosperity which has taken place all around him. And thus it is that he is constantly on the *qui vive* to take any fresh cultivation wherever he can get a lease of new villages, and he has to make himself acquainted with the necessities and idiosyncracies of all the native landlords and his surrounding peasantry. This branch of planting work is called *Zemindaree*. The diplomacy involved is called *momladaree*.

The successful carrying on of a large indigo concern depends largely upon the amount of capital one can use in giving loans to native zemindars, *i.e.* land-holders. An eight or nine years' lease may be got of certain villages, the planter taking all the risk of collecting the rents, and paying the landed proprietor in a lump sum in advance, and generally also lending him a greater or less amount of rupees without interest for a stated time.

When a lease of a village is thus acquired, a European planter, by his better organisation and superior management, is able to get a better return from the estate than the landlord himself could get under the old lotus-eating, *laissez-faire* system, which is so characteristic of the languid Oriental—languid and voluptuous, at all events, as the Oriental landed proprietor generally is.

The first thing to be done, then, on the acquisition of such a lease, is generally to measure up the lands, to write up a rent-roll on a proper business system, to see that each tenant has his portion of land properly surveyed; and it is found almost invariably that where a cultivator may have been paying a native landlord for, we will say, four or five *beeghas*, he is in reality cultivating two or three times that amount. A rectification of the rent-roll thereupon takes place. Instead

of paying in cash, the cultivator may commute by agreeing to cultivate a certain amount of indigo at a certain rate. But until you get your village settlement, there is certain to be much heart-burning, many quarrels, and strong opposition—and no wonder—on the part of those who have been for generations accustomed to the easy rule of native landlords, and who are now for the first time brought sharply into conflict with the Western method of land management.

At the time I speak of, this is what was happening. The son of the old planter—an active, energetic, high-spirited young fellow—had taken in a lot of new villages, peopled principally by high-caste Brahmins, and he was measuring the lands with a view of settling the rent-roll and the proportion of indigo each tenant would have to cultivate. The man he had out surveying had several times been molested, the ryots were up in almost open rebellion, and frequent ugly rumours of dangerous complications and possibly even bloodshed had reached my ears. My friend, the young planter, had himself been maltreated in trying to rescue one of his servants who had been measuring some fields in one of the newly-acquired villages. The police, of course, like vultures scenting carrion, had managed to make their services a matter of competition between the contending parties. There was no doubt of it, they had been heavily bribed by the planter to stand by him in the establishment of his rights. But being very nearly every one of them fellow-castemen of the recalcitrant villagers, and being the recipients of very heavy bribes from that side also, it can easily be imagined that their sympathies lay with the men of their own lineage. My neighbour, too, while he stooped to buy their aid, had not tact enough to conceal his contempt for them, and the smouldering embers of their disaffection, as might be naturally expected, soon broke out into an open flame of active opposition, and at the period to which my narrative has now brought us, the whole of the *dehaat, i.e.*

the collection of villages, was in open rebellion against the factory; and the natives were being actively encouraged in their obstruction by the whole body of the police in that part of the district. My poor neighbour had hailed my advent as a welcome diversion, and myself as a valuable ally, and my uncompromising attitude towards the police, and my prompt and summary method of dealing with them, backed as I was by the moral support of all the high English officials, with whom I was on terms of the utmost friendship, and by the no less telling material support of a wealthy proprietary, who had implicit confidence in my judgment and discretion, and who allowed me to make my own estimate of expenditure—all these made my friend look to me for moral support, and it was partly under my advice that he was now working and attempting to measure and settle his new villages. I had quietly at different times sent down native able-bodied fellows from my own *dehaat*—men I had proved and whom I could trust; and these were quietly working among the villages, trying to win over the best disposed of the tenantry to the side of the factory; and one of the chief weapons they employed was to sow disaffection between many of the villagers who had felt the oppression of the police, and the police themselves.

Of course the police, on their part, knew perfectly well what I was doing, and they had determined to make an example of my fellow planter—show their power—and thus serve a double end in tightening their hold upon the villagers and gratifying their spite against a *Sahib* at one and the same time. They saw, indeed, that if the factory power was to predominate, their own perquisites and prestige would suffer grievous diminution. But, acting under my advice, my neighbour had managed, by timely concessions and by wise compromises with numbers of the leading men of many of the disaffected villages, to gradually make some headway, and he would no doubt in time have managed, as I had done,

to placate the people and institute a reasonable and fair system of cultivation which would have been to the mutual benefit of both planter and villager. But this was just what the *Darogah* and his constables did not want.

Many a black scheme was mooted; many a "vain trick" was tried; many a cunning trap was set; many a plot was concocted; and many a time the whole machinery of chicanery, intrigue, intimidation, and corruption was set in motion to discomfit the hated planter.

And so they schemed and planned and watched for a pretext to draw him away from the *dehaat*, if even only for a time, so that they might be left free to reconsolidate their waning influence, and foment fresh disaffection against the *Sahib*. If they got the *Sahib* away, they agreed they would once more get the wavering villagers back "under their shoe soles," as their proverb has it.

At last in desperation they concocted a devilish plan.

But you shall hear. Let us leave them at present thus.

Just about this time I received *khubber*—*i.e.* news—one day that a *burra Sahib*—*i.e.* a gentleman of some standing—had arrived at the other side of the *Dhaus*, and "would I send the elephant across for him?" The *Dhaus*, as described in a former Chapter, was a reedy, weedy, shallow lake, rank with aquatic vegetation and oozy with slime and fetid mud, which stretched for some miles behind the factory. Under the sweltering sun of summer, it was a very hot-bed of fever, and in the cold months bred chills and agues, and was at all times an uninviting and dangerous plague-spot. Its surface teemed with legions of water-fowl, and round the *marge* I have often had glorious snipe shooting; but there were many alligators in its sullen recesses, and there was only one or two devious shallow fording-places, where a space was kept clear of weeds, and on which two or three flat-bottomed and very crank *dug-outs*, or village canoes, plied intermittently.

Wondering what *Sahib* could possibly have travelled by

this little-frequented route to find his way to my isolated "diggings," I hastily ordered out the old "tusker," and watched through my field-glasses, with some curiosity, the scene on the farther side of the *Dhaus*.

I could see a large *palkee*, and a goodly group of *bearers* and *banghy-wallahs*—that is, pack carriers—squatting around it, and a tall, soldierly-looking man, clad in the ordinary white costume and *sola* hat of the civilian in the East, stood a little apart, waiting for the elephant, but I could not recognise the face at the distance. I could see the great elephant floundering along through the weeds and muddy water. The *palkee* bearers were evidently now being directed by the villagers to go round by the other and better crossing, some two miles northwards; and at last the *Sahib* and his luggage got placed on the kneeling elephant, which next, slowly uprising, began the return march through the lagoon.

To one situated as I was, scores of leagues from any society, surrounded by a hostile and lawless population for the most part—for, away from my own factory cultivation, the villagers looked with little favour on the white man—years of bad management and downright oppression by former managers, nearly all of them unprincipled natives, and some of them worthless half-castes, had given the factory a bad name, and my readers can imagine the warm glow of welcome and the throb of delight with which I at last recognised in my unexpected visitor Dr. C——, a dear, kind-hearted, jolly old medico, who had at one time been stationed near me in Tirhoot, and who was now high up in the Government medical service. I had been for nearly a year completely buried in these solitudes, and had scarcely seen a white face during that interval.

What a godsend that visit was to me! what it may have saved me from, I will not tell. I was fast losing health at the time, and was in a desponding, listless frame of mind and body; but the advent of the cheery, jovial doctor

acted on me like a charm, and for the two or three days he stayed with me, his presence did me good "like a medicine."

How we did talk over old times and old comrades to be sure!

What fun we had among the snipe and quail and wild ducks! We went out one day to look for tiger near *Nurreya Rajbarra*, a famous village for game to the northward, having heard news of a kill in the *jowah* jungle there; but "stripes" was too wary for us. I may as well describe the day's doings.

Having only the one elephant and not many beaters, the tiger, who must have been "*a discreet animal*," left his lair betimes, and being seen by a cowherd leisurely lobbing across the sand flats near the river, we were, after considerable delay, put on his tracks—yet quite fresh and easily discernible on the occasional patches of wet sand. He had gone straight through several insignificant streamlets—straggling branches of the great swift rolling Koosee; and that we were close on the trail was evident from the wet drip on the farther banks, showing where the water had been shaken from his sleek sides as he emerged. With hopes raised and our pace quickened, and throwing out the beaters in the sparse jungle to form a sort of half-moon formation, we now slowly advanced, fully expecting that the big river would stop the fugitive, and keeping a bright look-out for a shot.

Alas! the tiger was beyond a doubt now "a *highly discreet* animal."

Tracing the tracks right up to the steep, crumbling edge of the main river, we found ample evidence of a fact which has often been questioned, but which was well known to both the doctor and myself, namely, that tigers take unhesitatingly to water when it suits their purpose, and that they are in fact expert and powerful swimmers. This particular animal, a regular Koosee tiger, had made no more ado in taking to the rapid current than if he had been a buffalo.

In fact, as we gazed at the evidences of his fondness for aquatic feats, we were startled by a cry from one of the beaters, "*Dekho, Sahiban! Bagh to ooder hai!*" (See, see, sirs, the tiger is over there!), and looking across the wide, swiftly rolling stream, sure enough we saw the tiger, a fine, full-grown, splendidly marked male, leisurely making his way among some hummocks and ridges of sand not many hundred yards away.

"Hang it all! I must have a slap at him," said the doctor.

"All right, old man! But it's too far," I responded. Bang went the doctor's rifle in reply, and the bullet sent a piff-paff of white sand hurtling up some distance behind and to the right of the tiger. This had the immediate effect of accelerating his movements somewhat, and presently we saw him leave the ridgy tract, where the shrunken, dry weather channels gleamed in the sun, and scampering up a ragged bank, disappear among some flapping *patair* bushes, evidently making straight for some well-known haunt or friendly refuge in the jungle beyond.

The doctor was too excited now to listen to reason.

Nothing would satisfy him but to make for the *ghaut*, and follow up in pursuit at once.

The certainty was that the tiger, fearing pursuit and having been disturbed, would make for some distant lair, and with only one elephant, few beaters, and only half of a short day before us, it was foolish to imagine our quest would be rewarded by success.

However, I had only to please my guest.

Off then we started. Crossed the *ghaut*. Beat all through the *patair* jungle. Got all the Choonee villagers to come and join the line. Made din enough to frighten all the wild beasts within a radius of half-a-dozen miles. Finished up by shooting a fine hog deer and two hinds for ourselves and servants, and half-a-dozen pigs for the lower caste villagers, and finally got home after dark rather tired, and

the doctor not a little disappointed. He had heard so much of the fame of the Lutchmeepore and Fusseah jungles, that he had made sure of getting a tiger-skin to take down country with him. Next day, however, he must depart; and we determined to try and get the Ilmasnugger elephant during the night, and beat down the other side of the Koosee towards Burgammah, where he (the doctor) would rest for the night, if necessary, and then continue his journey by boat towards Calcutta *viâ* Bhaugulpore.

All arrangements were accordingly made, and next day making a good start, we enjoyed a pleasant day together, having the two shikar elephants and two small pad elephants, which my *Gomastah* had succeeded in borrowing, and a good line of beaters with us as well.

We did not see even "sign" of tiger, but made a good general "bag," and reached Burgammah early, found Tom H——, my assistant, to welcome us; and we learned from him that there had been a bit of a row down the river on the next concern, where those village measurements of which I have before spoken were being proceeded with.

As I wished to see my neighbour, to arrange certain matters about boundaries, establish a *neerick*, or rate of payment for certain produce, and a common scale of remuneration for such and such services in connection with our factory work, and wished also to cheer him up by the moral support of our visit, we determined, as the doctor had overstayed his time already, and as the tents were not very many miles away and close to the river, to make a start after dinner, it being a bright moonlight night; and we ordered horses to be sent down to a *ghat* some miles distant, opposite the camp, while we proceeded by boat.

You will now begin to see the drift of all this long preliminary description.

The drama is developing.

Just as we are about starting from Burgammah, very different scenes are being enacted down the river.

My neighbour, it seems, had been out shooting during the afternoon, and coming to a seemingly deserted hut, had heard cries as of some one in pain proceeding therefrom.

Calling, and getting no response, he had alighted and looked in, and found there a poor outcast, one of the Rahabs of these jungly river-side villages, evidently in the acute stage of cholera.

As planters, we are all more or less habituated to these scenes, and have little of the fear that natives manifest when the dread cholera is about. This poor creature had evidently been abandoned to her fate. The panic-stricken inhabitants of the lowly thatched dwelling, if indeed she had not been dwelling alone, had left her to perish untended and unsolaced by the presence of any of her own kind.

My friend being in the main, although hot-tempered, yet a humane and tender-hearted man, tried what he could do for the poor thing, and again remounting, galloped back to his camp, took some cholera tincture, and went back to see if haply he could do the dying woman any good. Of course his actions had been watched. He was all the time the object of never-sleeping espionage; and the *thannadar* had vigilant observers always noting his slightest movement, if so be they might find "occasion of offence" in him.

When he got back after the lapse of an hour or two, it was eventide, and the wretched woman had gone to her account.

D—— was alone, as he imagined, and unobserved.

Reverently placing the end of her *saree* over the poor dead face, he returned to camp, intending to send some *domes* to bury the body early the next day.

Meantime the *thannadar* had been apprised by his creatures of all that had occurred, and getting together "some lewd fellows of the baser sort," men he knew he could rely on, to swear black was white if need be and stick to it, he put into

execution a scheme which he had quickly matured in his evil brain, which was no less than to charge the planter with a capital crime.

Accompanied, as was after proved, by several of his *Budmash* followers, they went and set fire to the hut in which the dead body of the woman lay, and then in pursuance of the vile plot they had concocted, they got a few of the more disaffected villagers to come rushing into the *thanna*, or police station, to lay a charge of ravishing and murdering the woman against the planter, and that to hide the evidences of his crime he had set fire to the hut.

They acted the dismal drama well. The *thannadar* went out at once with his men, and took written depositions and statements of all they heard and saw, and by the dawn of day, armed with these, and accompanied by a bevy of suborned witnesses, and even a few perfectly guileless and innocent villagers, whose credulity had been imposed on by the cunningly acted drama and by the hue-and-cry got up, they set out for the residence of the nearest deputy assistant magistrate, who was a native officer also, and whose court was being held some considerable distance off. The subordinate police had taken care to keep any friendly disposed *Assamee* cultivator out of the way.

All this had been the work of the night. Under cover of the congenial semi-obscurity they had brought their devilish plot to a climax; and we must now look back to see what was transpiring elsewhere.

The doctor, myself, and my assistant started as described from Burgammah in the broad clear light of the moon, and got safely down the river to the *ghat*, near which was the camp. The doctor looked at his watch, and we found it was just about half-past eight o'clock.

Intending to give D—— a pleasant surprise, we left the boatmen with the boat, and proceeded to the tents. We found D—— in bed, but soon woke him up. We again noted the time

casually. It was about nine now; and very shortly we had our inner wants supplied, and commenced an all-night sitting of a tobacco parliament. D—— told us all his troubles—he mentioned that cholera had broken out in his *dehaat*, and incidentally, as quite a common occurrence, told us of the sight he had seen in the evening in the solitary hut. We were quite snug in the cosy tent, and did not, as it happened, see any of the servants; and it being the cold season, they were, as we thought, all too comfortably rolled up in their voluminous cotton garments to take much notice of our quiet confidential talk. As a matter of fact, it subsequently transpired they had all got leave for the night to go to a *Bhoj*, or feast, in one of the neighbouring villages.

After several hours' pleasant gossip, sundry "*pegs*"—in fact, D—— took rather more than was wise—and not a few cigars, we judged that our *syces* would have had time to get down with our horses to the appointed tryst; and after a parting jorum, we accompanied the doctor back to his boat, were poled across stream, got our horses, bade the dear old doctor "*bon voyage*," and away we cantered back to the outwork, having a spin after a good boar on the way, in the grey chill dawn, and although he managed to escape our spears, we felt we had earned our breakfast well.

Now it so happened that I had to go into Purneah on legal business, and found a summons awaiting me from my *mookhtear*, or attorney, and so I was not long in starting, and sent Tom H—— up to the head factory to attend to matters generally till I returned. This took us both away from the immediate vicinity of the plot; and as the doctor was away at Calcutta, and his boatmen were strangers to the neighbourhood, you will perceive how the nefarious plans of the wily and wicked police were favoured by the absence of all those who could have been called by D—— as witnesses of his whereabouts during this eventful night.

Of course the party of conspirators were as equally in

ignorance of our midnight visit as we were of their rascally plan.

Here then was a pretty complication.

The deputy magistrate was not a very experienced officer and was burning for distinction and promotion. He only knew D—— by repute, and it was no more than a notorious fact that he was a bit of a *Zubberdust wallah*, that is, a high-handed, rough-and-ready, masterful sort of man. Little wonder then that the magistrate, hearing only the skilfully-arranged evidence, seeing the official and sworn statements of old, experienced police officers, and finding the terrible charge backed up by a host of cleverly-suggested probabilities, came to the conclusion that D——, in a fit of guilty passion or frenzy, had really committed this odious crime, and he accordingly set off with a strong bias against him, and prepared to look only for evidences of guilt in everything that might come under his observation. However, to make a long story short, D—— was arrested. The plentiful libations during the night and the tobacco smoke had not improved his appearance, and when the posse of police arrived at the tents and woke him up, he had a wretched bilious headache, and looked in fact bad enough to have really been the murderer and fire raiser they sought to make him.

To be brief, D—— had the shrewdness and good sense to hold his tongue. The police got no inkling of the fact that by the most providential arrangement, by the happiest good fortune, a party of *Sahibs* had spent the greater part of the night with the object of their vindictive hate. Nor did D—— seek to enlighten them. The police story was a most plausible one; they backed it up by a marvellous chain of circumstantial evidence, and the false and real were so cunningly and cleverly interwoven, that even the English residents in Bhaugulpore, when they first heard the story as told by the police, were inclined to put the matter down as another of the enormities committed by "those desperate

characters the indigo planters"; and so for a time poor D—— was looked on as a vile desperado, and a fit subject for the hangman.

As soon as he could, however, he secured the services of a clever barrister from Calcutta. He wanted now "to hoist his underground engineers with their own petard." "In the pit which they had digged they would find themselves ensnared," and he looked forward to having a respite from the blackguards who had been weaving their vile nets about him for so long. Not a hint or a whisper of his intended defence was allowed to escape. The very police themselves were almost stunned by what seemed the signal and complete success of their odious conspiracy.

H—— and the doctor and myself received timely notice to attend when the case was at last called on. The police evidence was given with fullest amplitude of detail. Every action of D—— on the memorable day was sworn to with microscopic fidelity. The horse he rode, its colour, the time of his first visit to the hut; his going in; his coming out again—all were faithfully recorded, and not a word of denial was said. The witnesses were not even cross-examined.

"We quite admit it, your honour;" "I have no questions to ask this witness." Such sentences as these were all that escaped the lips of the leading counsel.

Things looked very black against D——. So well had his secret been kept, that very few even of the Europeans present in court on the first day of the trial but what really believed that at the very least D—— had been guilty of some terrible impropriety, if not of the actual offence of which he was charged.

The character of the woman was sworn to. The evidence of several of D——'s servants was twisted so as to make it appear that he was not a paragon of morality, and the accumulated testimony of seemingly trivial details all tended

to strengthen the conviction in the minds of his accusers that their triumph was already assured, and that they would succeed in accomplishing the ruin of their enemy.

The interest was intensified during the second day. The *thannadar* swore to having visited the burning hut along with others whom he named. He described the finding of the charred corpse. A few of the leading disaffected villagers, all active enemies of poor D——, swore to having seen him *leave the hut and set fire to it.*

The cross-examination at this stage was quick, probing, searching, decided, dramatic.

"At what hour was this?"

"About eleven o'clock."

"You are quite sure?"

"Quite sure."

"It was moonlight?"

"Yes."

"You could not be mistaken?"

"Oh no; it was the *Sahib* sure enough."

They knew him by his dress, by his *topee*, his white face, and so on. Some very curious contradictory medical evidence as to the appearance of the body, and the utter impossibility of such appearances being possible on a body burned alive, were elicited all confirmatory of D——'s story. The ryots accounted for their presence near the scene by saying they were returning from some feast at the house of a friend, but, being frightened at the *Sahib*, and indeed on bad terms with him, they hid in the jungle and watched him. Each had his story pat. The very variations and seeming discrepancies all tended only the more firmly to substantiate the main damnatory facts. And no wonder. The whole thing had been rehearsed for weeks. Every scoundrel knew exactly what he had to say, and had heard exactly what every other witness in the conspiracy would say. The tale was coherent in every part. No cross-examination could shake the many facts as

thus sworn to. It was abundantly proven to the satisfaction of every disinterested hearer of the second day's evidence that D—— was guilty of a cruel murder, and that he had crowned the vileness of his misdeeds on the fatal night by burning the hut in a drunken rage over the wretched victim of his frenzy—BETWEEN ELEVEN AND TWELVE O'CLOCK. This was the crowning dramatic incident. They all agreed on that point. They were all pinned down to that statement. There was no divergence of opinion as to the precise hour. It was just a little before midnight. They were all sure of that.

And so the third day came round.

Of course you have guessed the *dénouement*, and can tell the sequel.

First was read D——'s own statement. The skilful disclosure and development of the plot to remove him from the *dehaat*—the intrigues that were set on foot and maintained against him by the police and the leading cultivators—were depicted in a quiet yet masterly way that carried conviction to every mind. Then came certain medical testimony which quite falsified many important statements of the police.

A deep sigh of relief broke from every European in court as each thread of the vile conspiracy was deftly laid bare. And when H——'s evidence and my own and the good old doctor's was given, clearly accounting for every minute of time on the fateful night, from early in the evening, the bubble conspiracy had burst, and as vile and subtle and inhuman a plot as ever was hatched, even by a Bengal *thannadar*, was exposed in all its wicked hideousness.

Yes, the Bengal police of that day were a nice, gentle, amiable set of officials.

It was lucky for D—— that nocturnal visit of his fellow-countrymen. But for that, the diabolical ingenuity of his foes might have triumphed, and he might have been done to death—an ignominious and cruel death—by the false

oaths and lying testimony of a pack of ruthless human hyenas.

The chief conspirators got sentences of varying severity; and for a long time the Koosee planters were not much troubled with the plottings and evil devices of the DAROGAJEE and his insolent swaggering henchmen the native village police.

CHAPTER XII.

AN EVENTFUL DAY.

The famine of 1874—Nature of relief works—Fatalism—Humane tendencies of British rule—Epidemics—Sharp contrasts—Crowded incidents of planter life—A fierce hail-storm—A runaway elephant—Through the forest—Hue and cry after a thief—A desperate fugitive—Setting an ambush—Female furies—An exciting diversion—A desperate scuffle—Capture—Tactics of the female gipsies—Horrible cruelty—A hapless little one—Outwitted!—The robber escapes—Feasting amid famine—A Brahmin *bhoj*—Appearance of the village—The guests—The cookery—The feast—Strange plates—A motley *melangé*—Prodigious appetite—Once more on the road—Reach Soopole—Hospitable reception.

In the early part of March, 1874, a terrible famine raged in Nepaul and all along the northern Bengal provinces bordering on the Terai.

On the 15th of March of that year, Sir Richard Temple, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, came up with a party of officials to inspect the provision that had been made to mitigate the famine in these remote districts. At Caragola Ghaut, on the Ganges, enormous quantities of rice had been stored under temporary cover, and myriads of tons in bags were stacked up all along the banks of the river like the extended walls of some field fortification.

Having considerable influence with the riverside population I was entrusted with the work of collecting boats to transport the rice to the famine-stricken districts further north.

Day after day long flotillas of native boats were laden with

the welcome grain, and despatched as fast as the work could be done up the swift Koosee beyond the Nepaul frontier, and there distributed among the starving villagers.

Relief works were instituted in various parts of Purneah and North Bhaugulpore, and I had to be constantly out among the poor wretched, emaciated creatures working on these embankments and roads, and altogether, what with seeing to the hiring, despatching, and the administration generally, of water carriage of rice and relief works on land, I had a busy time of it.

Readers at home can scarcely realise the awful nature of such a dire calamity as that of a famine in India.

The lower classes, as I have before stated, are practically fatalists, and when misfortune overtakes them, they are the most helpless creatures in existence. They have no inner resources of self-reliance, and, leading almost a vegetable life, rarely moving many miles from their villages, they have little or no conception of the vast world lying outside their own immediate ken, and when their crops are smitten down with drought or blight, or swept away by floods, they generally, not without a deep, dumb pathos, calmly submit to the inevitable as it appears to them, and accept their fate without a murmur.

In seasons of cholera, emigration often takes place, when all of the able-bodied portion of the population remove to distant hill villages; but the aged and infirm are left behind, to fall victims to the dreaded pest, or escape as may be their "*Kismet*," *i.e.* their fate.

These periodical scourges no doubt thinned the ranks of the swarming hive of humanity in these thickly populous districts, and in olden time was doubtless Nature's ruthless way of keeping up what might be called a healthy balance between those who subsisted and the means of subsistence, although this may seem a callous way of putting it. As for hygiene, it was not known.

However, the humane tendencies of British rule could not allow such a state of things to continue, hence it is that now, when famine threatens any district, when cholera or small-pox or fever or any other epidemic begins to claim its wonted quota of victims, the humanitarianism of British rule steps in, medical aid and medicine are promptly forthcoming, and vast supplies of grain are sent from every point. Roads and embankments are made for that purpose, and canals and railways are being constructed in all directions with a view of mitigating such a calamity as famine; and the whole tendency of English rule, as regards its native subjects, is to conserve their lives and ameliorate their condition.

If it be cholera that breaks out, an ever active army of members of the noblest profession known to our common humanity are sent to battle with the dread disease, and seek to stay the hand of the destroyer. If it be fever, the provident and humane foresight of the Government, at enormous expense, has provided a means of coping with this evil also, and the cinchona forests of Darjeeling, Upper India, the Neilgheries and Ceylon, yield the life-giving and fever-dispelling quinine; and this is dispensed to the fever-racked population at a price which brings it within the reach of every one, or, in the Government-aided dispensaries, is given gratis, and has been the means of saving yearly, thousands of lives.

So too with small-pox.

This favourite medium of the goddess Kali, by which she was supposed to yearly claim her myriads of victims, is now by compulsory vaccination much reduced in its potency for destruction. And so it is that a new problem is now presented to thoughtful students of Indian life and character; the onward sweep and resistless march of the army of population is fast treading on the heels of the capacity of the country to carry its human swarm, and the big economic

problem of the future, "How shall India sustain its teeming millions?" becomes yearly one of greater perplexity, in the wise solution of which the most momentous issues are involved.

The magnitude of this thought has led me to digress, however. My purpose is only in these sketches to give a suggestive narrative of the varied incidents which make up the story of a planter's daily life, and the reader must pursue the suggestions to such solution as may suit his temperament.

My wish is simply to show the varied calls that are made upon the planter's life, and the demands which are constantly being made upon him for the exercise of very much higher qualities—both moral, intellectual, and physical—than are involved in the mere pursuit of field sports.

I would not have it thought for a moment that the planter has nothing to do but go out day after day on his trusty elephant in pursuit of game, and I would have given a totally false impression of our tent life in India if the reader jumps to that conclusion. Life in India is indeed highly dramatic, and presents the most constant and startling contrasts.

The ostentatious grandeur of the lordly zemindar, with his retinue of sleek retainers, is sharply accented as he moves along in all the profusion of jewelled magnificence, his elephants bedizened with gorgeous trappings, and his importance loudly proclaimed by every circumstance of barbaric pomp, when one hears amid the sound of the drums and the clash of cymbals, the wailing cries of a long row of melancholy beggars that line the roadside like Lazarus or blind Bartimaeus of old, their shrunken frames and contorted limbs telling the most touching tale of human suffering, and exciting oftentimes feelings rather of repulsion than of pity, so horrible is the spectacle. Take any busy bathing ghat near a city. The contrasts are so sharp and pointed, the incidents are so varied, the canvas is so crowded, the phases of humanity

are so multifarious, that when one comes fresh from the quiet country, it all seems like the crowded phantasmagoria of a feverish dream.

But one soon gets accustomed to it; yet ever and anon one receives a rude shock, which reawakes his first sensations of pity or of wonder, or of awe, it may be, and such vivid incidents as become memories for a lifetime are constantly being presented.

Take one such—the adventures of a single day.

On Monday the 9th March, 1874, I started in the early morning from Lutchmepore, my head factory, to endeavour to reach the small station of Soopole, some forty miles distant, over rough and rugged country.

I had first to cross the Dhaus in one of the crank canoes I have spoken of, and on the way across I saw a man-eating alligator. Item the first.

On the other side, having mounted my elephant, which was in waiting, I had to decide a case of trespass between two angry litigants, who sought to end their long-standing quarrel by my arbitration.

The case was one involving nice points, and it took me some time to settle it. Item number two.

Meantime the sky had got immensely overclouded, and shortly from the westward a fierce hail and thunder storm came sweeping up, eddying and whirling with crushing fury and howling noise, working along in a north-easterly direction.

Thatched roofs and houses were caught up as if by a mighty arm, and were scattered about in all directions; the hailstones, as big almost as pigeons' eggs, with sharp, jagged edges, came crashing down with relentless fury. I was glad to take hurried shelter in a loose stack of refuse thatching-grass and withered stalks of Indian corn, piled up loosely near a cattle-camp, while my elephant, maddened by the stinging of the hailstones, set his tail as straight as a ramrod, shook both *guddee* and *mahout* off his back, and made straight

back for the factory through the sluggish waters of the Dhaus. Item number three.

The fury of the storm was soon spent, and the frightened villagers came forth bemoaning their sad fate and sadly gazing on ruined crops and, in not a few cases, maimed and wounded cattle; and I had to console them as best I could by a promise of some little assistance from the factory.

Meantime messengers were despatched to bring back the recalcitrant elephant.

Taking advantage of my enforced stay in the village, numbers of poor sick creatures—most painful cases of suffering, some of them—were brought out to me, as I had the reputation of being a bit of a *baid, i.e.* a doctor.

I generally carried a small pocket case of instruments with me and a bottle of quinine, and in one or two cases I was able to give some slight relief by simple little surgical operations and doses of the febrifuge. One case was a horrible one. A poor half-witted old man had fallen in a fit of epilepsy into a smouldering fire, and his burns were something fearful to look upon. It was evident he could not recover, as incipient mortification had already set in, but the patient and silent resignation to his fate was something most pathetic. Then I had to speak to the headmen about their crops, discuss the prices of produce with them, and generally hear all their complaints and profess an interest which it was really very hard sometimes to feel.

Once more getting on the elephant, I had to cross a stretch of boggy country, with rice swamp here and there, traverse a part of the old original *sal* forest, which stretched its arms like some great polypus all along the ridges running down from the main spurs of the Terai into the plain country.

These forests are very sombre and gloomy.

They are inhabited by curious jungle tribes of *Banturs* and hillmen, and in their gloomy solitudes, hunting, charcoal-

burning, and a little rude cultivation are the chief occupations of their inhabitants.

I had just emerged from one of these forest-crowned ridges and was about to cross a pretty large open plain, studded with cultivated fields and having a hamlet in the middle of it, when I saw a crowd of villagers rush frantically out from the houses, tightening their *cummerbunds* and brandishing their *lathees*, that is, their fighting staves, some seemingly armed with clumsy spears and old swords, yelling and crying at the top of their voices as they pursued a desperate-looking fugitive whose gaunt, wiry frame boasted no other covering than a tattered shred of blue cotton cloth round his loins, and who seemed straining every nerve to elude his infuriated pursuers and reach the friendly shade of the sombre forest. I took in the situation at a glance.

This was evidently a gipsy thief, one of a gang of notorious house-breakers whose depredations for some time past had been the talk of the villages round about. He belonged to the gipsy caste—*Nuths*, as they are called—a wandering, predatory tribe of which had been camped in the forest for some time.

They had actually paid a nocturnal visit to my factory, and had stolen various things from the servants' huts.

They had broken into the house of a neighbouring village banker, and had in several cases succeeded in stealing jewellery from the persons of women, whom they had waylaid and maltreated as they were returning from the village bazaars.

They were a lawless and desperate set; and telling the *mahout*—as I had evidently not yet been observed by either the fugitive or his pursuers—to draw back within the shade of the wood again, we directed our course so as to intercept the fugitive, and if possible succeed in capturing him, as it was important that the gang should be broken up.

It was unfortunate that I was on the elephant. Had I been on horseback, my task would have been easier.

Two of my peons were with me, accompanying me on foot, and my old bearer was with me on the *guddee*.

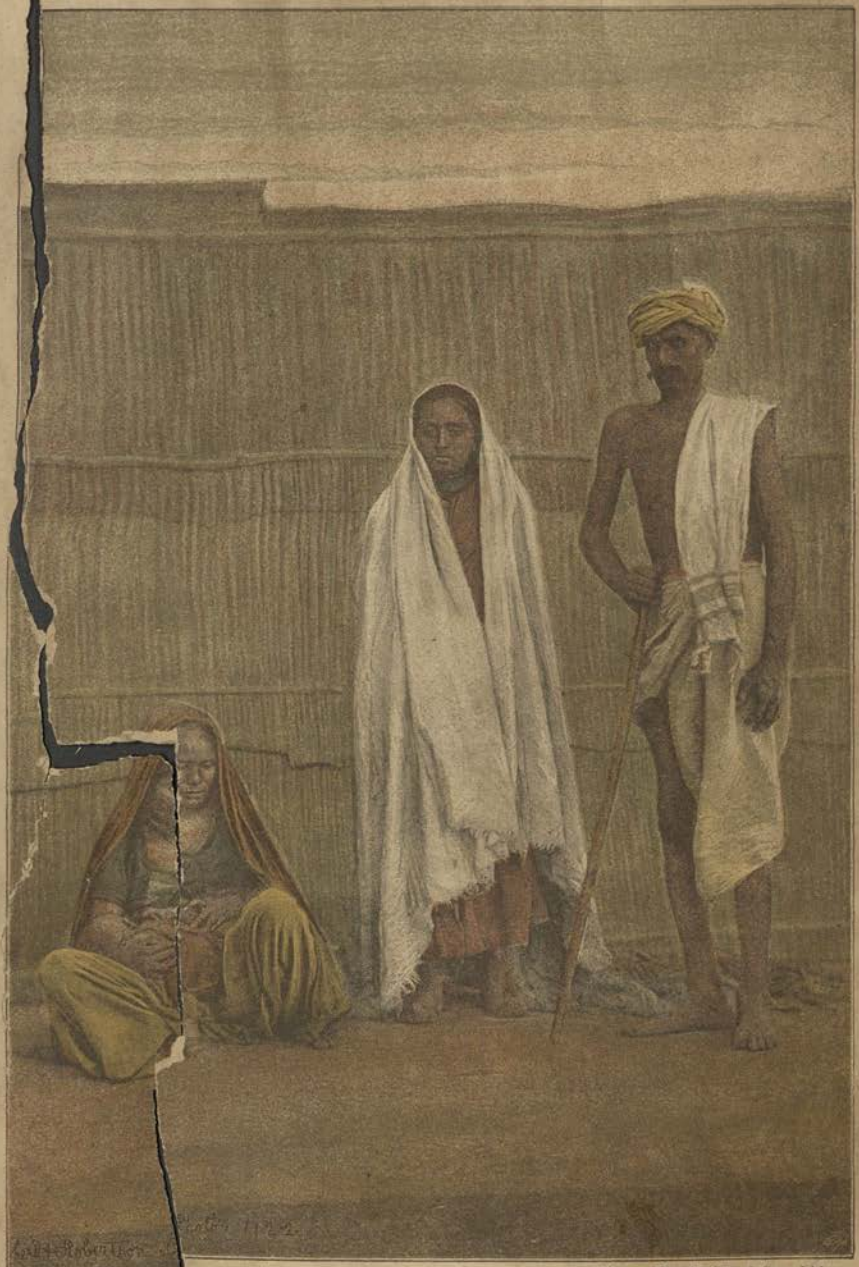
Telling the *mahout* to be ready with the elephant, we alighted, and creeping cautiously forward under cover, arranged ourselves in ambush to intercept our intended prize. We had however counted without our host. We were not the only interested beholders. Scarcely had we taken our places —the wretched man being now near us—so near, in fact, that through the bushes we could see his set teeth and gleaming eyes, and his wiry, swarthy frame strained to the fullest nervous tension. He was making straight for us, and would in a few moments have run into our ambush; when, with a shrill scream close beside us, which made us start as if we were the guilty parties and not he, a bevy of shrieking harpies, with dishevelled hair, bare bosoms, long skinny fingers clawing the air wildly, and with discordant clamour, came rushing at us from the rear and surrounded us.

These were the *Nuthnees*, or female gipsies, the members doubtless of the pursued man's harem.

One of them had a sickly babe in her arms, and casting off every shred of apparel as they screamed at us, they tried to distract our attention from the desperate fugitive, and the situation was, for me at all events, a very unpleasant one. They came tearing around me like so many furies.

I was like Macbeth with the three witches, only more so.

They shook their skinny fingers in my face, dancing around me, trying to take hold of me, and it was only by my promptitude of action in laying about me most lustily with my riding whip that I was able to keep them at arm's-length. I learned afterwards that this brazen conduct was a common dodge of these gipsy women; but it was my first experience of their tactics, and I mentally wished it might be my last.



Vincent Brooks, Day & Son. Lith.

Ru[illegible]uths. Wandering gipsy thieves.

The pursued man was quick to avail himself of this sudden diversion in his favour.

He doubled like a hare, twisted like an eel through the first few villagers who were now close upon him, eluded with cat-like quickness the blows that were aimed at him, and with surprising agility made straight for the thickest part of the undergrowth that skirted the forest.

I am ashamed to confess that for the first time in my life, my blood being up and my hunting instincts being aroused, I struck a woman.

The leader of the harridans, a particularly repulsive-looking object, tried to throw herself in my way and encircle me in her loathsome embrace. What I said I am afraid was not exactly a prayer, but hitting her straight between the eyes, I sent her flying, and away I went after the retreating form of the thief as hard as I could lay legs to ground. The poor hunted wretch was now much distressed, for during the scuffle in the village he had received a crack on the sconce, from which the blood was flowing, and his gait was now unsteady, and his quick breath came in short spasmodic gasps.

The villagers had evidently overshot their quarry, and so far as I could see, he and I were alone. I was gaining upon him, and was almost within reach of him with my hunting whip, when he doubled round the bole of a thick *sal* tree, and before I could stop, he had again put some distance between us.

I was determined, however, not to be balked, and being in pretty good wind myself, I made after him again.

This time his good fortune seemed to desert him, for catching his foot heavily in some trailing jungle plant, he fell prone to the earth, and in a minute I bestrode his recumbent figure.

I had a strong silk sash as a *cummerbund*, which I hastily unwound, and was about to pinion him, when the women

again made their appearance on the scene. There were three of them. The old hag had evidently retired.

The one with the babe in her arms was a plump, matronly body; the other two were young and exceedingly pretty-looking.

Indeed, many of these gipsy women are noted for their great physical beauty, but they are as fierce and treacherous as tigers. Their natures are savage and cruel, and the life they lead of continuous theft and depredation, does not tend to make them any the more gentle and pacific.

The rough-and-ready method I had adopted in dealing with the old hag had evidently shown them that I was not to be dissuaded from my purpose by the usual way they adopted of flinging away their garments already referred to. One of the younger women implored me in the most moving language she could command, to have mercy—*dohai!!*—on her man—*admi*—and not to take away her bread-winner, piteously appealing to me to think of her and her children.

They could see no sign of relenting about me. The man lay breathing and panting heavily; the cries of the advancing villagers approached nearer.

I fancied a quick glance of intelligence passed between the man and the matronly woman with the babe.

He seemed to be getting his wind and nerving himself for a fresh effort.

The woman sprang forward now, and with excited gestures and screaming volubility began to heap imprecations on my head. She poured forth a torrent of *galee*—abuse—on my devoted head, and on the heads of all my relatives down to the twenty-seventh generation. Seeing me still relentless—for I was now beginning to pinion the man with my sash—she seized her child by the two arms, swung it wildly around her head, the hapless infant wailing out a pitiable cry, and then, with all the fury of a madwoman, she struck its little

limbs against a tree, bruising its poor little feet, and making my very heart stop beating with the horror of my indignation. I could not help the impulse, but forgetful of all else, I rushed forward to save the infant, when, with a demoniacal yell of exultation she flung it at me, and, to save it from falling, I caught it in my arms.

She turned to flee, and I pursued, encumbered with the infant; and not being altogether what you might call a trained nurse, I found it no easy task to capture such a fleet forest Hebe as she proved herself to be. And then all of a sudden came the mortifying reflection that she had completely outwitted me, and that this last desperate episode had been a ruse to enable her husband to escape.

Turning to look, I found this was really the case.

I need not pile up further details. Suffice it to say the rascal escaped. All that was left—for the woman got away too—was the poor miserable babe.

On both his little heels were ghastly ragged wounds, where the savage mother had dashed the little creature against the tree.

The chaukeydar of the village, who now came up, took charge of the poor little thing, but it did not live long.

The gipsies shifted their camp and left the neighbourhood; and I subsequently found, on comparing notes with my friend S——, the Soopole magistrate, to whom I related the adventure, that this was not at all an uncommon dodge of these gipsy women when any of the males of the tribe were hard pressed, as had been the case on this occasion.

This is a bare, unvarnished recital, and such a narrative may do more to give my readers an idea of the savagery and cruelty of paganism than many a long sermon.

This, then, is item number four.

The next experience was destined to be one of those sharp, sudden, and significant contrasts which are peculiarly characteristic of India—painful in their suggestiveness,

startling in their suddenness, and calculated to make even the most thoughtless think and the most critical and unsympathetic hold their peace, when they begin to ponder over the problem of British government in India.

At the moment of which I am treating, grim famine was stalking over the land, thousands of the peasantry were literally starving. And yet such is the strange, incomprehensible nature of the ostentatious Oriental, I was about to witness a scene of lavish extravagance and riotous profusion.

It was now past midday, and little hope remained of my getting to Soopole in time for dinner. But the day's adventures were not yet finished.

The story of the excited and angry villagers was much as I had surmised. The thief had been surprised in the act of stealing some brass utensils from the courtyard of one of the houses. One of the village women raised the hue and cry, and had been struck down by the robber, and then followed a fierce scuffle, and the incidents I have just described.

It was now long past *tiffin* time, and these frequent delays on the road had caused me to miss my *dak*, where refreshments awaited me. And so, after all the excitement and exertion, there was little wonder that I felt most unromantically hungry.

The *jhet ryot*, or head man, gave me very welcome intelligence, then, when he informed me that there was a *bhoj* being celebrated in the neighbouring village, and if I would submit myself to his guidance, he would feel honoured at being permitted to show me the way.

A *bhoj*? you ask. What is that?

Well, shortly speaking, a *bhoj* is simply a feast. The peculiar signification of the term over an ordinary feast is, that at a *bhoj* the provision is so ample that you are expected to eat to repletion. A *bhoj* is generally the outcome of the ostentation of some opulent villager, who desires to stand well with the Brahmins, dazzle the susceptibilities of his

humbler neighbours, and excite the envy of those who are of his own standing. Sometimes the *bhoj* is given to the Brahmins in fulfilment of a vow, or to propitiate a deity, or to ensure good fortune in some undertaking, or to show gratitude for the birth of a son and heir, or recovery from a sickness, or the happy termination of a speculation, or the return from an auspicious undertaking, and so on.

The present *bhoj*, as I learned, was being given by a wealthy merchant and village banker, in fulfilment of a vow of gratitude consequent on the birth of a son and heir. To be strictly correct, the giver of the feast was a notorious usurer, and was reputed to have made mints of money out of hoarded grain.

Taking our way, then, through the forest in company with several of my leading *ryots*, we were not long in emerging upon a most beautifully situated collection of neat thatched houses, with a small temple in one corner of the hamlet, and a deep mossy well in the centre of a great courtyard or, more properly speaking, market-place, which was shaded by several wide-spreading fig trees. Round the trees were rude earthen altars or sylvan shrines; quaint figures of gods and goddesses in rudely shaped pottery were perceptible in groups on every platform; and daubs of red and white pigments splashed around, with withered flowers and faded tinsel ornaments, bespoke something of the local sanctity of the place. It was evident at a glance that the village was *en fête*. The inhabitants were clad in clean raiment. The women peeped at us in dozens from every little enclosure. The children looked oily, sleek, and contented, and ran about in swarms. There were certainly no indications of famine here.

Numerous groups of what Sydney Smith would have called "oleaginous and saponaceous" Brahmins were collected all around the circle; and the giver of the feast, surrounded by adulatory friends, beamed complacently from under the shade of a goodly caparisoned *shamiana, i.e.* canopy.

Hearing the clank of my elephant, and being doubtless apprised of my coming by the running footmen who accompanied our party, there was an immediate commotion in the circle on my advent.

The fat and jolly old banker came waddling forward to meet me, with many a profound salaam, and gave me a truly Oriental and hospitable welcome to his village.

The Brahmins vied with each other in the flowery rhetoric of their compliments and the obsequiousness of their genuflexions.

The children, clinging to the skirts of the parental garments, gazed up wonderingly with their beautiful round brown eyes at the unwonted appearance of a white man in the midst of their quiet rural surroundings. My elephant, descrying behind the shade of some friendly trees several of his own genus, piped out a shrill query in elephant language as to what was the likelihood of *his* being allowed to participate in the *bhoj*, and thus evoked a shrill chorus of elephantic responses, which caused the village cattle to low, the Brahmins' ponies to snort and neigh, the ragged and mangy curs to howl and yelp, and the tethered goats in the various enclosures to bleat; and all this medley of sound, with the din and chatter of the excited and festive villagers, and the flood of bright colours from the gay visitors and the many rich Oriental surroundings, formed such a picture as could only be seen in India; and which, if painted by the magic brush of some gifted artist, would surely be looked upon by our staid, sober, stay-at-home, and—shall I say it?—rather unbelieving and unimaginative mediocrities, as something altogether unnatural and impossible.

At the back of the village, two great trenches at right angles to each other had been dug, not unlike what one sees when he may happen to visit a great military camp, and passing the front line of tents, finds his way to the rear, where the regimental cooking may happen to be carried on.

In the trenches, large quantities of glowing logs and redly burning charcoal were giving out a fierce heat. Great *chatties* of rice were steaming and bubbling with that delightful sound always suggestive of pleasant cookery.

Great metal *dekchees*, on which the lids were blobbing and dancing as the savoury steam forced them up, and escaped in grateful little jets, which roused one's gastronomic perceptions to a most acute pitch of anticipation, were the cynosure of the observant eyes of a mob of hungry, expectant, nondescript beggars and cultivators and charcoal-burners and denizens of the forest generally, who had been attracted by the rumour of the *bhoj*, and who looked forward to having a regular jollification from the *débris* of the feast, after the invited guests had first partaken. Behind these, in true Oriental fashion, were squatted numbers of the ladies of their respective harems and their hungry progeny; and the eager glare in their eyes, and the expectant attitude of the poor emaciated bodies, with the wistful, hungry look which one gets accustomed to see in the poor districts in India, was quite sufficient to tell a sad tale of want, hunger, poverty and wretchedness, approaching even to the verge of starvation, mutely suggestive of the straits to which these poor creatures had been reduced by a succession of dry and unpropitious seasons.

However, the preparations for the *bhoj* were proceeding merrily.

In the *dekchees*, kid's flesh was simmering, vegetable curries and fish curries were approaching that delicious golden stage when their aroma invades every avenue of sense, and there was a general, subtle, indescribable something, suggestive of feasting, pervading the whole atmosphere, which accentuated my hunger and still further whetted my already sharp-set appetite.

The giver of the feast was evidently for the nonce no niggard. There must have been fully three-score Brahmins,

and as many more invited guests who were about to participate in his bounty, and the poor people who had been attracted by the rumour of the feast must have numbered two or three hundred.

As I alighted from my elephant, I was met by my smiling host, who put a *salamee* of two rupees into my outstretched hand in token of his feudal submission.

This I transferred to my *mahout.*

I was then conducted to a seat under the *shamiana,* and presently, after being sprinkled with attar of roses, a few spices were served up on a curiously carved metal tray, and then the guests began to seat themselves around, in groups and companies, beneath the *shamiana.*

At these feasts, the cooking is invariably done by Brahmins, as of course a *Rajpoot,* or a high-caste writer, or any respectable high-caste man, would be in danger of losing caste if he partook of food which had been prepared, or even touched, by a man lower in caste than himself.

But a Brahmin being the highest caste of all, it would be of course no derogation for any one to eat food prepared by him.

Indeed this forms one of the great sources of revenue by which the poorer Brahmins manage to eke out a tolerably comfortable existence. They generally have lands which they and their servants cultivate, but the amount of little perquisites which fall to their lot in the course of a year from festivities and social observances of this kind is very considerable.

The food being now about cooked, two or three brawny attendants, nude to the waist, but with the sacred thread over their shoulders denoting their sacerdotal caste, came forward, each bearing on his shoulder a pile of freshly-gathered, sweet, clean and crisp leaves of the great floating water-lily. These leaves form a dense umbelliferous mass over the surface of the tanks and lagoons which lie like

jewels embossed in every nook and angle of the forest country where there is a depression.

The leaves are gathered by the *mullahs*, or fishermen caste, and are hawked around the villages whenever any feast of this sort is going on. The leaf itself is about the size of a very large dinner plate, and as it has a little depression at the point of junction with the stem, it forms in itself quite a natural and certainly graceful dining plate.

To each seated visitor one or two of these leaves were now distributed, and then the steaming pots of rice, each grain beautifully plump and pearly, and separated from its neighbour, were brought up, and *handfuls*—not spoonfuls, but handfuls—were ladled out with pleasing impartiality to every squatting and expectant guest.

Behind the rice distributors came others apportioning the goats' flesh and the curries.

On every leaf a little pile of pearly rice was flanked by a steaming mess of curry, and a little mound of smoking meat or fish.

Next came a distribution of various *masalahs* and *achar* —that is, *chutnees*, condiments, and pickles.

But not content with this promiscuous mixture, your gastronomic ideas would have received a rude shock had you seen what next was added to the miscellaneous provision.

What was that, think you ?

Neither more nor less than a good round handful of *jaggree*, or very coarse native sugar. But this was not all.

It was going to be a rare *bhoj*, and no mistake. For now, in the middle of the leaf, where the stalk had been cut off as I have described, one more addition was made by another attendant who flopped down as the crowning *chef d'œuvre* a dripping handful of rich, luscious, clotted cream, or curdled milk, which is looked upon as a great delicacy by the natives, and goes by the name of *dahee* or *dhyre*.

But these were only the lighter parts of the feast, what

a Scotchman would call the kickshaws. These were only intended to be the toothsome accompaniments to the more solid viand which was next served out.

This took the form of enormous barley meal and flour *chupattees.*

Rather leathery these latter, it must be confessed, but savoury withal, as they had been well fried in a plentiful allowance of boiling ghee or clarified butter.

Shade of Epicurus! can you fancy the repast? And yet it would have done your heart good to have seen the zest with which the heterogeneous mass of comestibles was consumed, and the celerity with which it disappeared.

The capacity of some of the guests seemed to be infinite.

The famous feats of the porridge-eating Cornishman, Jack the Giant Killer, would have been completely put in the shade by the performances of some of the participants at this famous *bhoj.*

Several greedy fellows I noticed, not content with stuffing themselves till they emulated, nay exceeded, the performances of the most absorbent boa-constrictor in the neighbouring forest, dexterously transferred several *chupattees* from the hands of the hospitable dispensers, and succeeded, as they thought unseen, in secreting these beneath that portion of their anatomy which was nearest the ground.

One would have thought they intended, like an old hen, to brood over their *chupattees* and hatch out a new lot.

But the cunning rascals were intent on providing for the inevitable time when hunger would again reassert itself.

So quickly watching for an opportunity when they thought no one was looking, they slipped the *chupattees* out from beneath them, and secreted them in the folds of their flowing robes behind their backs.

And so it is that human nature asserts itself much in the same way all the world over, whether it be a Sunday-school feast in Great Britain or a *bhoj* in Pagan Hindostan. Next

came a distribution of quantities of *mittai* or sweetmeats, after which *pān sooparee*—that is, prepared betel-nut, cardamoms and other spices were handed round. All this terrific gorging had been going on to the accompaniment of the deafening brattling and clanging of several *tom-tom* players, horn-playing demons, and other musicians (?), whose combined efforts formed a pandemonium of sound which might have driven Apollyon himself crazy. Having, however, satisfied my hunger, although I certainly did not partake of the miscellaneous *olla podrida* I have described, I did not wait for the hungry onslaught of the poor half-starved, expectant outsiders, but as I was anxious to get into Soopole before nightfall, I made my *salaam* to my hospitable and delighted entertainer, and starting once more on my so often interrupted journey, made up for lost time by hurrying on across country, and I need not weary the reader by more minutely recounting the rest of the adventures which befell me on this memorable day of crowded incident.

Suffice it to say, that after ploughing my way through dense jungle tracts, and floundering through many a treacherous quagmire, I arrived, weary and sore from the rough jolting of this prolonged journey, safely at Soopole, where I received a hearty welcome from the deputy magistrate and his dear little wife, and after a bath, some supper, and a good hot whisky toddy, and a humorous narration of the day's incidents, I was soon safely asleep in bed.

CHAPTER XIII.

FAMINE AND FIGHTING.

Early spring in India—"The Black District"—Desperate straits—One ghastly group—Relief works—Conservatism of natives—The old easy-going style of work—A zealous young reformer—Glowing visions—Wheelbarrow reform — Irritating — Explaining — Theory — Actual practice—Back to the old style—The coolies — Sad scenes — Poor suffering humanity—The terrible hunger—Back to Hoolas—The seed industry—Native dodgery—Tricks and tests of the seed trade—Mode of contract—Fluctuations of the market—A slippery neighbour—News of a meditated looting expedition—The *Golail*—Preparing for a fight —Call out the levies—Disposition of our forces—News of the raiders—Confronting the robbers—Their insolent audacity—A knock-down blow—"Wigs on the green"—A regular ruction—"Loot" and "lay on"—The tide of battle—Victory!

NEXT day broke crisp and clear, one of the lovely, almost perfect days of early spring in India, when a soft breeze gently stirs the heavy masses of the dark mango groves, and sets the spear-pointed leaves of each waving feathery bamboo softly whispering to its neighbour.

Light cirrhus clouds fleck the sky, the dew gleams on every tiny leaf as if Khrishna Jee had himself passed during the night with his train of ten thousand sportive maidens and had scattered pearls on each side as they passed. The sun's heat is tempered by the breeze, the young crops, if it is a good season, are shooting up their delicate olive-green blades, "o'er all the wold,"—everything is balmy and fresh and redolent of the sweet springtide, and at such a time India is certainly a delightful place to dwell in.

Would that it could be always Spring! But alas! the

fierce struggle for existence, the desperate disparity between classes, the awful burden of frail humanity, forces itself upon the serious attention of even the most frivolous; and one has but to go through the busy street of even a small rural village to find ample evidences that sin and suffering and man's depravity are not the mere figments of the theologian's brain, but are hard, staring, palpable realities. But a truce to trite moralisings.

To the north of Soopole and between Durbhunga and the Terai, the famine had been so severe, and to such an extent had the dearth spread, that all over the country-side the villagers, speaking to each other, characterised the district as the "Black District."

For nearly twelve months no rain had fallen, the cold weather crops of the previous year had long ago been consumed; the early rice crop had been a failure; the late rice, on account of the drought, had not even been sown, and the seed corn for the winter crop had been eaten.

To such dire straits were the people reduced, that even the rigid bands of caste had been loosened, and it was no uncommon thing to see crowds of hollow-cheeked villagers surrounding the quarters and houses of the wealthier classes, piteously begging for even the sweepings of the granaries; and I could tell harrowing tales of the dire straits to which the poor people were reduced by the famine which had settled upon the land.

Snakes, field rats and mice, even grasshoppers, were greedily eaten by the lower castes, wherever they could be procured. Proud Rajputs and erstwhile well-to-do tradesmen battled fiercely with each other for possession of some broken roots and carrots which had been left in the field near one of my outworks.

In one village near the *Baugmuttee*, one of my friends came upon a horrible and ghastly group of seventeen corpses, all huddled together 'neath a *Bhair* tree, and consisting of

evidently the total sum of four generations of one family, who had elected, in the dumb despairing apathy of Oriental fatalism, thus to die together.

There was the old *Dada* and *Dadee*, the decrepit grandfather and grandmother of the group; then their once lusty son, with his poor wife and their children, and two or three tiny little forms, withered and shrivelled up out of all semblance to humanity, black with famine and exposure, that had been last born into the world.

All the bodies were each simply a desiccated bag of bones held together by blackened parchment.

Each poor corpse was so shrivelled and attenuated that it could have been spanned within the compass of one's finger and thumb, between the stomach and the backbone.

There were not many such horrible sights as these, thanks to the noble efforts made by the Indian Government to relieve distress, but in former famines such sights were not at all uncommon, and the victims of these awful visitations might have been numbered by the ten thousand.

Relief works had been started near Soopole and were in full swing at the time I speak of. These consisted of embankments to restrain the flood waters of the river, and of roads connecting certain points, which would help to bear traffic in support of the projected Tirhoot railway, and upon these relief works teeming thousands of half-starved villagers had been drafted from the most famine-afflicted portions of the provinces, and a whole army of engineers and civil officers of various grades were engaged upon the work of supervision, distribution of famine relief, and in various other duties and capacities.

One curious illustration of the conservatism of the native character was told me by one of the relief officers. It is perhaps worthy of record. The usual *modus operandi* of a village family engaged on embankment work was this: the lord and master, armed with a *Kodalie* or cutting hoe, would

fill the little earthen basket carried by each of his wives and children, as they bore it towards him. Two or three cuts of the hoe, done in very leisurely fashion, would suffice to put two or three pounds' weight of mould into these aforesaid little bamboo baskets.

Then when the *tokree* or basket was filled, the *Kodalie* would be thrown down, and the workman, stooping with many a weary groan and with the utmost deliberation, would, in unison with his wife or child, the bearer of the burden, lift the *tokree* with its little pile of mud or mould on to the head of such assistant.

She, if it was a woman, would then in the same leisurely manner glide gracefully away to the embankment, and with a nod as if she was pouring out a libation to mother earth, would deposit her little contribution to the slowly growing mound.

It was for all the world in effect much like a long stream of two-legged ants incessantly passing and repassing, in seemingly aimless fashion, from all points of the plain; but such was the assiduity of these poor creatures and the power of numbers, that small and seemingly insignificant as the individual contributions were, yet at the end of the day a large addition would be made to the ever-growing bulk of the embankment. Here and there on the earthwork cuttings little mounds were left, just as English navvies leave them on railway works, and these are called *Shahee* or *Sakhee*—*i.e.* a witness—to show the depth of the cutting.

The women who carry the little baskets wear a little pad of plaited straw or grass on their heads to ease the pressure of their load.

But it really is most whimsical to see the deliberation that is evinced, and the miserable little handfuls of stuff that are carried in this slow and costly fashion. One does not know whether to swear or groan. Most *sahibs* do both, freely.

One energetic young fellow, who had been engaged in engineering work under very different circumstances—overlooking English navvies in fact—felt the zeal of a reformer stirring within him, and, quite unmindful of the good-natured chaff of his superior officer, who had had considerable experience of the unprogressive Oriental mind, he determined to try to introduce the methods of the English navvy, and see if he could not effect some reform upon this old, primitive, and certainly ridiculous-looking custom.

He tried to indoctrinate some of his native underlings with a portion of his own fiery youthful zeal. He went to an infinite amount of trouble to lay down planks from the cutting of the embankment, and then, mindful of the slight frames of his coolie workers, he got several miniature English wheelbarrows made, weighing really not much more than some twenty pounds or so; they were made of light wood, were nicely finished, and were quite suited to the capacity of the weak, under-fed, small-boned natives to whom he wished to teach their use.

He had so often in the mess-tent dogmatised on his favourite theory, that the natives only wanted teaching and demonstration, to do work equal in degree to that of the English navvy, that his superior officer good-naturedly challenged him to put his theory to the test, and this was the result. He had taken a deal of care and trouble to get his wheelbarrows made, he had adapted them as he thought beautifully to the capacity of the human machines he had to work with, and after a deal of explanation to his *baboos*, or overseers, he got a picked gang one morning to attempt the new-fangled wheelbarrow innovation.

The *baboos* in most mellifluous and persuasive accents explained to the coolies the method of working the new machines.

They clearly demonstrated to the young officer's complete satisfaction that the work would be more effective, if not

actually easier, than the old-fashioned method of carrying mud in baskets.

The action of the wheel was explained, the reduction of friction by impelling said wheel on the plane of the prepared planks was carefully dwelt upon, and then the brawny Englishman, to give a practical demonstration, filled the first barrow himself, wheeled it easily along the planks, tumbled it over the end of the embankment with a vigorous and triumphant twist, as much as to say "Εὕρηκα"!!—"There! I have solved the problem of public works construction; the practical methods of the West have been wedded to the patient and abundant labour of the East, and now public works will go ahead with a rapidity and an economy which will change the whole administration of the mighty department which has charge of the public works of this great Empire!!"

Yes! the theory was perfect, but alas for the practice! So long as the zealous young officer *himself* remained as overlooker, things went pretty well. Certainly it was a little disappointing to find that no less than three or four coolies were required to fill the barrow with any approach to expedition. Then the man who wheeled it, light as it was, had a rather suspicious shakiness about the legs, and an unfortunate tendency to sit down every few yards and squat in the old ancestral Oriental fashion, or else awkwardly to overturn the load at the wrong time and in the wrong place.

The intervals for a long rest, during which the tobacco and lime were carefully triturated in the palm of the hand, and then handed round as a sort of fraternal refreshment, were also rather frequent.

But what did that matter?

A *beginning* had been made at all events!

They would soon get into the way of filling and wheeling and emptying the barrow with greater precision and rapidity; and in any case he had practically demonstrated his theory to

be correct—that it only wanted patience and perseverance to make good English navvies out of half-starved Hindoo village coolies.

Visions of promotion flitted before his mental eye.

He pictured to himself a vast establishment for the manufacture of a new and improved Oriental wheelbarrow for which he might get the contract.

And so, after setting several of the wheelbarrows at work, he departed to eat his *tiffin* with a contented mind, and with that inward glow which always accompanies the successful inauguration of any great and lasting reform.

Alas! alas! how inadequately had he gauged the precedents of caste methods—the irremediable conservatism of Oriental habit!

No sooner had he left, than the *baboo* retired to the shade of the nearest tree, to console himself with the seductive music of his fragrant hubble-bubble.

The coolies, wishing to carry out the sahib's instructions, but weary already of the strange exertion of unwonted muscles, thought they would make a compromise, and while using the *nya kul*—*i.e.* the new machine—of the sahib, would do so in the ancient fashion observed by their ancestors for hundreds of generations back.

And so it was that when the young officer came down to the works with quite a number of *burra sahibs*, after *tiffin*, they saw the grand new wheelbarrows that were to effect such a revolution in the Public Works Department, each with its wheel carefully taken off and laid on one side, and while one coolie carefully filled the barrow with little dabs of earth from his *Kodalie* in the old antique style, the other four, squatted alongside, chewing tobacco and indulging in pleasant gossip till the *nya kul* was filled, after which they would call in the aid of four or five others, who had all to leave their work, and by the combined efforts of the eight or nine, the little wheelbarrow was lifted on to the heads of the

four, who then had a very funereal pause, marched solemnly along to the edge of the embankment, and there carefully deposited their microscopic contribution to the earth-work, in regular old orthodox style. You can imagine the chaff that ensued! That young officer is now a grey-haired old veteran, and has done good service many a time and oft since then, but wheelbarrows are not yet introduced to any large extent in India, and he has been quite content to work on in the old patient way.

I merely give this as a somewhat humorous illustration of the unchangeableness of native customs. The story is a true one.

Well, I was anxious, as I had been nominated by Government as one of the local committee on the relief works, to see what was being done at Soopole.

I had to consult with the magistrate and local engineer, Mr. Handley, who, strange to say, is now, even while I write, in the service of the New South Wales Government, having like myself succumbed to the Indian climate, and come down to gain a new lease of health in this salubrious land of the Eucalyptus.

Well, getting on our horses, we rode down to the coolie lines, and after going all over the works, which were very extensive, and seeing the various operations, we came back to preside over the distribution of cooked food prepared daily for the more necessitous cases that the burden of the famine had thrown upon the hands of the authorities.

There is at all times a vast army of helpless, suffering creatures in an Indian district, who are beholden to the charity of well-to-do neighbours for their very subsistence.

In every village, at every ferry, near every bazaar, 'neath almost every shady grove, and at every place where two roads meet, there is sure to be some miserable, palsied, deformed, degraded beggar, piteously appealing to the charity of the passer-by, and of course these, what might be called per-

manent and professional beggars or objects of charity, had been attracted to the relief works from all quarters.

But besides these were scores of poor emaciated aged men and women, scarcely able to totter, owing to their weakness; dozens of attenuated, pallid-looking children with a glazed skin, swollen joints, and shrunken limbs, and the awful hungry look which marks the famine-stricken—their heads seeming out of all proportion to the poor, wasted, parchment-covered bodies; ghastly objects indeed they were, and they all moved with such a listless, objectless gait, all had the same piping, quavering, querulous cry, all looked at one with a horrible pathetic pleading look which spoke of absolute hopelessness, that it was a terrible ordeal to have to pass down the long ranks and see the awful sum of unspeakable misery, the intense depth of abject wretchedness, and poverty, and hunger, which famine means in India. It was bad enough to come across occasionally in one's peregrinations, such an object as is described by Arnold—

"A wretch in rags, haggard and foul—
An old old man, whose shrivelled skin, sun-tanned,
Clung like a beast's hide to his fleshless bones;—
Bent was his back with load of many days—
His eye-pits, red with rust of ancient tears—
His dim orbs blear with rheum; his toothless jaws
Wagging with palsy, and the fright to see
So many and such joy. One skinny hand
Clutched a worn staff to prop his quavering limbs;
And one was pressed upon the ridge of ribs,
Whence came, in gasps, the heavy painful breath.
'Alms!' moaned he, 'give, good people, for I die
To-morrow or the next day!' Then the cough
Choked him, but still he stretched his palm and stood
Blinking and groaning 'mid his spasms."

To see such an one occasionally, I say, and it is a common sight, is bad enough; but to see such a sight multiplied many-fold was my experience on that never-to-be-forgotten day, and alas! it was a sight that might have been seen at many centres of relief work during that dreadful famine year.

It was painful to see with what greedy avidity they struggled for the boiled rice, like wild beasts, and how they almost tumbled over each other in their eagerness to get a little pittance more. It was a dreadful sight!

The recollection of those gaunt, cadaverous, living skeletons, haunted me for many a day, and yet one could not help a thrill of patriotic pride at the thought, that but for our presence in the country as rulers, under the compulsion of Christian compassion, countless thousands whose lives were saved must have perished like dumb starved cattle.

I spent a day or two at Soopole in making full inquiries as to the working of the relief system, getting my instructions for minor works to be carried out in some of my own outlying villages where the pressure of want was being felt, although not nearly so much, or so intense in degree as in Tirhoot.

I got back to Hoolas without further adventure, and certainly had a tamer ending to this visit than to my previous one.

But I must tell you about that.

* * * * *

To give some graphic idea of the lawlessness of the villagers and the state of strife that had been the rule between rival factories during the busy competition of an excited seed market, I may narrate an account of a regular pitched battle which had caused me hurriedly to leave Soopole some months before the time of which I have just been speaking. The affair happened in this way.

I had gone to Soopole to look after some rent cases, which had required the attendance of most of my head men and a large number of my chief executive servants, and while quietly enjoying the hospitality of my friend Handley, I received news of an intended attack on an outlying seed dépôt of my factory.

At that time I had at Hoolas (my largest dépôt for the

seed trade, which was carried on by the factory in conjunction with indigo manufacture proper) a smart little fellow named D——, whose duty it was to give out advances to cultivators who would contract to supply so much indigo seed at a price which was mutually determined upon.

I had on behalf of the factory made large contracts with Calcutta merchants, with planters in Lower Bengal, and in various other planting districts, to supply them with their annual requirements of seed, and if our local seed crop was a bountiful one, we also purchased largely in the bazaars, and generally the margin between the price we paid for it on the spot, and our contract price for delivery, resulted in a very handsome profit.

If, however, the local crop failed, or was a partial failure, the situation became somewhat complicated, and the outlook not so rosy.

The native seed merchants, and the cultivators themselves, were just as quick to recognise the fluctuations of the seed market as I was. They could generally pretty well guess what amount of contracts I had made, and they would have recourse to every dodge known to the subtle Oriental intellect, to force prices up in the local mart, and as there were other dealers, both native and half-caste in the trade, the natural competition to supply large contracts from a possible short crop would sometimes send up prices to almost a fabulous extent.

When the crop was a full one, there was no trouble—supplies would come in freely, natives would in fact beseech you to buy from them; and as my employers were the Agra Banking Company, I generally had the best of it in a plenteous season, because I always had a command of ready money.

It so happened that this year the crop was a very short one. I had, as I have said, made large contracts in anticipation of a good crop, and I had had considerable difficulty in getting

the cultivators who had contracted to supply me, to keep their engagements.

All sorts of tricky practices are indulged in when such a conjunction of affairs arises, and the present was no exception to the general rule. Old worthless seed that may have lost its germinating power is furbished up, dried and mixed with a little turmeric and indigo dust, and is then rapidly revolved in barrels or canvas bags, to put a nice polish on it.

Large admixtures of worthless forest seeds are used to increase bulk, and it requires considerable smartness and knowledge of native character to run a seed dépôt at such a time.

We have various tests for seed. The most common of course is the magnifying-glass. We have the water test—that is, heavy seed will generally sink, while light seed will float; and according as the sample answers the test, so do we deduct the proportion from the bulk. To test artificially coloured seed, we generally put a spoonful in a white linen handkerchief, wet it and rub it gently in the palm of the hand, when of course the colouring matter comes out on the white linen.

Such samples are invariably rejected by an honest dealer.

These are all tricks which one soon gets accustomed to and can cope with, but things are not so easy when the season has advanced and customers down south are clamouring for their supplies. The quantities you rely on getting from your cultivators come in very tardily, and you scour the country with your peons and messengers, to force those who have contracted with you to bring in their quota.

These in turn make all sorts of excuses.

Sometimes you have to take the law into your own hands, and send out gangs of coolies to cut the crop *vi et armis*, and bring it in perforce to your own threshing-floor.

Not unfrequently you will find an *assamee* has taken

advances from a rival seed merchant, and while he, having spent the money, feels quite secure, he quietly chuckles over his part of the spoil, and leaves you and your rival to fight together for the possession of the crop.

It is indeed a busy and an anxious time.

Your customer at a distance has no sympathy with you and your troubles; the very existence of his factory depends upon his getting the seed in time to sow the crop; you are bound down by heavy penalties to supply certain quantities within a given period; an error of judgment on your part in delaying to buy, in hopes that the market may fall, may be fatal; as some more astute or enterprising dealer may have meanwhile stepped in and swept the whole crop from the district.

Now on the present occasion my smart little assistant, D——, had managed to make very favourable local contracts.

In fact, nearly all the cultivation of the surrounding district had been secured under advances to the Hoolas factory.

A neighbouring dealer, rather a slippery customer, although professing to be a great friend of mine, had, I knew, made large delivery contracts, but being in want of ready cash, he had omitted to give advances, and at the critical moment found himself with short supplies; and I had already acted the part of a good neighbour to him, by sending him large quantities which I could spare, and on which of course I might have made a good profit elsewhere.

Seeing the market going up, however, I had made a few other contracts, and could not now afford to let him have any more seed.

Many of my small sub-contractors, and some of the leading cultivators, had held back portions of what was still due to me under my advances, and the usual higgling and diplomatic bargaining was of course going on.

The condition of my rival in the trade, if I may so call him, was becoming desperate, and so I was not altogether

taken by surprise when I received an urgent message from my young assistant to hurry back at once, as he had heard that a raid was about to be made upon a fine large store of stacked seed plant, upon which I had made advances, and which was garnered up on the threshing-floor of a rich villager who owed me money, and located at some little distance from the Hoolas outwork.

The information went on to say that undoubtedly the nominal proprietor of the stuff had been bought over not to very vigorously defend his property, but to make some little show of resistance, and allow the stuff to be carried away. There was no doubt, in fact, that it was "a put-up job," the result of which, if successfully carried out, would be that I would possibly lose my advances, lose a very valuable supply of seed, upon which I depended to fulfil my contracts, and of course lose a very handsome profit which was attached to the completion of my transactions.

There was no time for hesitation.

The details received by me were quite sufficient to enable me to resolve on my course, and, like a general preparing for a campaign, I sent in instructions by two or three mounted messengers to tell D—— what to do.

I resolved, if I could, to outwit the scheming rascality of my fair-seeming neighbour, and give him a "Roland for his Oliver."

We had our spies and our paid emissaries all over the district.

It was part of my policy to keep always a set of clever unscrupulous rascals, for I can call them nothing else, in my pay.

I was forced to do this in self-defence, and I was generally kept pretty well informed of every dodge that was on the *tapis* in my wide and lawless *Dehaat*.

Now in view of some such contingency as had just arisen, I had been carefully getting together the nucleus of a light

jungle artillery, in the persons of some dozen or more *golailchees.*

These were all smart active fellows, perfect adepts in the use of the *golail.*

The *golail* is a strong bamboo pellet bow, in the middle of the arc of which, is a little web stretched between two strands of the strong gut of which the string is composed.

The gut is, in fact, doubled in the centre, stretched apart with two little bits of bamboo and interlaced, so as to make a little mesh or net.

Hard mud pellets, dried in the sun, are then prepared, and an expert marksman with the *golail* can make it very "hot" for anyone who may chance to come against him unarmed with a similar weapon.

In fact, a man with a *golail* and a good supply of pellets, could keep up such a discharge that he could almost kill anyone who tried to approach him.

I have myself killed a squirrel at eighty yards with one of these primitive weapons, and in the hands of an expert marksman they are indeed very dangerous and even deadly.

Now I knew pretty well that if the stuff was looted, it would be taken to the threshing-floor of a relative of the owner, in a neighbouring village, by name Petumber Jha.

As he was a sub-contractor under my scheming rival, and had already collected a large amount of plant, some of it by fair means, and some by methods which were of the shadiest character, I determined at once to allow the proposed loot to be consummated, and to have ready a good ambush, and a numerically stronger force than that which was likely to be brought against me, so that I could swoop down in my turn and recover the stolen property, and take as much of the other stuff away also, as my fellows could conveniently carry off.

The old Borderer's law, in fact.

I kept my own counsel, but made sufficient dispositions to

give an inkling of what I intended, to one or two cunning trusty fellows whom I could rely on, and who were quite delighted at the prospect of having a game at "turning the tables."

And so I started for Hoolas.

I should explain that these men to whom I have just referred had accompanied me to Soopole, they being witnesses in a case which had been brought before Mr. Smith, the magistrate, concerning payment of some rents.

I sent them off at once on horseback, to make certain arrangements, the carrying out of which I had entrusted to them, and then late in the afternoon I bade adieu to my friends, and started back, determined to make a night march of it and get into Hoolas before dawn.

It is also necessary to explain that the seed crop is cut in the fields while the pods are still scarcely *pucca*, that is, before the last ripening stage is reached. As with indigo, so with nearly all the seed crops of India; when the pods are fully ripe, they open, and if not garnered before that last stage is reached, the whole of the crop would be lost, as the seed would fall to the ground.

Sometimes the native women, when gathering the crop, will strip great handfuls of the pods off the stalks, and bury them in the field, leaving certain marks by which they can afterwards distinguish the spot.

This is done only when the market has gone up, and is one of the ingenious ways in which the unsophisticated *ryot* seeks to evade the due fulfilment of a contract. When the plant is cut, it is bound in bundles and carried on the heads of coolies to the *Kaveehan* or threshing-floor, where it is piled up in circular heaps to be threshed out, winnowed, cleaned, and packed as leisure permits.

My emissaries throughout the district had been so busy in buying up and getting in growing crop, that much of it was stacked in this fashion at various centres, waiting to be

brought into the head dépôt, where I had a busy staff of men at work, threshing, cleaning, bagging, and transporting the seed to the head factory as fast as I could get it ready.

The reader will now, therefore, see that it was an object of some importance for my rival to get possession of enough seed to enable him to fulfil his contracts, and thus avoid a heavy pecuniary loss.

I regret this long explanation, but it is absolutely necessary to enable the reader to understand what followed.

I got into Hoolas about three o'clock in the morning. I found young D—— up, waiting my arrival, and in a state of fearful excitement.

He told me that he had been expecting all night to hear that the attack had been already made by Sheik Manoola, who was the ringleader in the nefarious scheme. But the information he gave me was quite sufficient to confirm all my surmisings, that the plan was in reality got up by my neighbour, that he was in desperate straits for seed, and that it was pretty certain this scoundrel, Sheik Manoola, who was a *Mussulman Budmash*, often employed by my neighbour to carry out some truculent design, would stick at nothing to carry out his master's orders. The man against whose threshing-floor the attack was likely to be directed, was a cunning, plausible fellow by the name of Moonee Lall Jha, and I knew perfectly well that any attempt he would make to defend what was practically my property would be only a bogus one. Luckily for me I had been well served, and the other side had not got *Khubber* of my return.

Two or three of my old Tirhoot servants, however, upon whose fidelity I could implicitly rely, gave me such information as quite to convince me that my first surmise had been the correct one, and I accordingly got out all my best *pyadas, i.e.* fighting men, and sent them circuitously away, with orders to station themselves in a small mango grove, close to Petumber Jha's house and threshing-floor. They

were to wait there until they saw our elephants; and D—— would come round on horseback and take command when the moment for action would have arrived.

I had three other elephants at the time, which, with my old hunting elephant "Jorrocks," made an available squadron, of what I might call heavy Oriental cavalry. I got my *golail* fellows on the elephants well supplied with pellets, and I started them off to be in readiness to swoop down and act in concert with my ambushed *pyadas* to cover our retreat.

All this of course took some time.

We took breakfast and were waiting for events to develop themselves, when presently, one after the other, in came my messengers to tell me that they had got a good force of reliable friends of the factory from the various well-affected villages, and they had quite an army of coolies, accustomed to do my weeding, and cleaning, and other factory work, who were ready to go anywhere, and do anything, while the promise of a double allowance of pice, and a feast into the bargain, if my plan turned out successfully, made them all eager for the performance of whatever they might be called upon to do.

I now felt pretty easy in my mind.

If the attack *did* take place, as I had every reason to believe it would, from the minute information given to me, I felt quite satisfied that I could beat my enemies at their own game.

And if the attack did *not* take place, I had made up my mind to at once clear off every stem of plant from Moonee Lall Jha's *Kurechan* and bring it into Hoolas. So I felt "equal to either fortune."

Just as we were about to start, up came one of Moonee Lall Jha's young men, in a state of well-simulated excitement and indignation, to tell me that Sheik Manoola, with a band of *budmashis*, had just swept down at his master's place, had beaten off all the retainers, and he pointed to some little

marks on his back and shoulders, which he said were severe bruises he had received while fighting valiantly in defence of his master's and my property. He seemed a little disconcerted at first, when he found I had so unexpectedly returned. The fellow was an artist in his way, and to hear him speak, one would have thought that he had himself performed prodigious feats of valour; but the gist of his tale was to the effect that the robbers were in over-powering force, and had managed to beat off all the defence Moonee Lall could bring to bear against them, and, in a word, everything had just happened as I had foreseen. It was now my time for action, so I tied up the messenger, and then we hurried off with our men down by the side of the lake; through a small village; in amongst a lot of growing sugar-cane; and through a wild jungle patch of neglected mango groves, and came out at the back of Petumber Jha's *baree* (that is the orchards, plantain groves, and bamboo *topes* which lay behind his homestead, which was rather an imposing cluster of houses; the man being well to do), and sending forward one or two trusty scouts to reconnoitre, they came back with the tidings that the whole of my plant had been carried off, that a long string of women and children and coolies, each with a bundle on their respective heads, were wending their way 'cross country to Petumber Jha's place, and that Sheik Manoola, with a considerable number of fighting men, was with the party.

They also recognised one or two of the *omlah*, that is the head factory servants of my neighbour, and I felt a chuckling sense of satisfaction that so far my plans had matured splendidly.

After a few moments' consideration with D—— we determined to ride boldly forward by ourselves, and first try the effect of an outspoken peremptory demand for the restoration of the pilfered plant.

So telling our fellows to come as quickly as possible behind

us, and unite all our scattered parties, so as to be ready for immediate action, we set off, and cantering leisurely after the retiring army of robbers, we rode boldly up into the midst of them, right in amongst Petumber Jha's men, who were busy mixing up all our stolen plant with their own.

And now, quiet, self-possessed, but determined, I demanded the reason of this high-handed proceeding.

Just as I expected, Petumber Jha was very polite, very cool, but full of artfulness; as he told me that he had purchased the plant from Moonee Lall Jha, was quite prepared to show me the receipts, and that in fact I had been made the victim of Moonee Lall Jha's duplicity, but that *he* had got the stuff, and intended to keep it. I could see, however, that my sudden appearance had somewhat disconcerted him.

He had evidently thought that I was well away out of the district at Soopole, and I could see several of my *ryots*, to whom I had often shown kindnesses, and who were on the whole pretty well disposed towards me—I could see that they felt rather ashamed of themselves and were inclined to slink out of the affair.

I did not mince matters, but told him bluntly he lied. I told him that I had heard of his intended raid, that I had hurried back to prevent it if possible, that the magistrate knew it, and that there was little doubt but that he had rendered himself amenable to a criminal prosecution, and that the best thing he could do was to make the coolies carry back the stuff, as I was determined to have it.

At this stage Sheik Manoola, feeling no doubt that he had all the weight of the rival factory at his back, came up in an overbearing swaggering way, put his hand on the bridle of my horse, and began speaking in a very insolent manner to me.

This roused young D——'s ardent temperament, just a little over fighting point, and with an explosive yell, which

would have done credit to a Tipperary man, he jumped from his horse and gave the Mussulman a truly British punch which sent him flying, and immediately, as may be imagined, there was a pretty row. There was "wigs on the green," and no mistake. Shouts, yells, exclamations, arose on all sides. The Sheik's men raised a defiant yell and came rushing at us with uplifted *latthees.*

I caused my game little Arab to curvet and prance round, using my heavy thonged hunting-whip with good effect, until I saw D—— remounted, then I told him to hurry off as hard as he could pelt, to bring up the fellows from our ambush beyond.

Away he went, and a good many of the enemy thinking he was retreating, very luckily for me, rushed after him, yelling like demons. But just then, right in the nick of time, out came my swarm of *pyadas* and fighting *Rajputs,* and there was a terrific *mêlée* as the contestants surged hither and thither in deadly strife. Petumber Jha's men came swarming out of a near enclosure, with spears, swords, battle-axes, *latthees,* and all sorts of nondescript weapons swaying in the air like a bamboo grove in a gale of wind. The women shrieked, the horses neighed, dogs barked, children were crying, and altogether there was a regular hullabaloo.

My men, however, were well led, and succeeded in rolling the tide of battle past the houses; and now up came D—— at the head of his picked men, with his four elephants in line, and the *golail* pellets began to sing and whistle around the heads of the chop-fallen followers of Petumber, who saw at once that not only were they overpowered in strategy, but out-numbered.

I was not sure, however, but that possibly a reserve force of the enemy might be in the neighbourhood, and it behoved me to get possession of the coveted seed plant as quickly as possible.

My friendly coolies—men, women, and children—were

working like so many ants, trying to save the treasures of their ant-hill in a sudden flood; and each with a bundle of plant on his head, some with half a bushel of seed tied up in a cloth, others with bundles under each arm, were soon seen flying hurry-scurry, helter-skelter across the face of the country, scattering themselves to avoid pursuit, and almost while it takes me to tell the tale, they had pretty nearly clear looted the whole of the stock of our would-be despoilers.

All this time the battle raged fiercely in two or three little separate centres, and my fellows with their *golails* were taking the utmost delight in peppering the unlucky followers of Sheik Manoola, who were all conspicuous by their red turbans, and who, moreover, as they were Mohammedans, were fair game to my delighted Hindoo marksmen, who did not spare them, I can assure you.

We now quietly began to withdraw our forces. By this time the news had spread like wild-fire through the adjacent villages.

Reinforcements were hurrying up; and then it became apparent how sagacious and important had been my generalship in providing the elephants and marksmen.

My men began to draw off, following the retreating coolies.

With loud cries of encouragement to each other, with the use of insulting and barbarous language towards myself, bodies of excited and angry villagers now began to make hostile demonstrations against the line of our retreat.

They would come on with a rush, yelling and shouting, leaping in the air, waving their staves, brandishing their weapons, and making all the usual demonstrations which are common in affairs of the sort, when D—— or myself, suddenly separating, would gallop outwards, and then come straight down upon them and charge, going through them like a hurricane, plying our whips the while; and then our elephants, with their load of expert marksmen, managed to keep back our pursuers, and foil them at every point.

I cannot pourtray on paper half the excitement and fun which we experienced.

Of course all this took a considerable time, but my coolies were now well away from the hostile villagers, and in my own *Dehaat,* and knew that once they got near Hoolas it would be utterly futile for any of our enemies to continue their pursuit.

And so ended "the battle of the *Kureehan,*" as my fellows called it.

There were two or three law-suits over it, but I was able to prove so clearly that they had been the aggressors, that I came off with flying colours in every case, and so crippled my unrighteous adversary, that I do not think from that day to this he has ever attempted to loot a rival threshing-floor, although up to that time it had been a matter of constant occurrence, during the seed season, to have half-a-dozen affairs annually of the sort.

CHAPTER XIV.

CASTE CHARACTERISTICS.

Curiosities of the census—Quaint characters—The Bohemians of the East—Mendicant friars—Actors and jugglers—The Story Teller—"After a weary day"—A visitor in camp—His appearance—His reception—The gaping circle of listeners—The story—"Petumber and Mahaboobun"—The story of their love—A rival—Plot and counterplot—The drama develops—Petumber's sudden return—Confusion of the wicked plotter—Jealousy—Wifely fidelity—The darkened bath chamber—Assumption of a strange character—The furious sandal—Crack!—"Tung-ng-ng!"—Acting up to his character—"Glug-glug-glug!"—Another good story—"The Brahmin and the Bunneah"—Sanctity and pretensions of the Brahmins—Their power on the wane—Progress of modern thought—An enlightened Hindoo on the decadence of priestcraft—Beneficence of British rule.

It is a trite observation that "one half the world does not know how the other half live," and certainly it is very applicable in regard to many of the modes of livelihood practised in what the poet calls the "gorgeous East." To the student of human nature, or to a contemplative philosopher, the mere nomenclature of callings in the Indian census would give rise to many curious speculations.

There is, for instance, the *Haddick*, or Bone-setter, corresponding to our veterinary surgeon, but with this difference, that the Indian bone-setter relies chiefly on the efficacy of certain *mantras* or charms, and curious medicaments which have been handed down to him through a long series of generations, and which are supposed to possess some occult virtue, which, when applied under certain conditions which

are rigidly prescribed by tradition, will effect a cure. Matrimonial agents are quite common. Public scriveners, or writers of correspondence for love-sick swains and modest maidens, may be found in every bazaar.

Of course the snake-charmer is a character which is never by any chance left out of any book treating of the East. Professional witch-finders—*Ojahs*, as they are called—are also common to every village community, although to English readers they recall a state of things now happily passed away from our history.

Byragees, jogees, fakirs, the whole fraternity, that is, of mendicant monks, hare-brained religious enthusiasts, begging friars, and transcendental nostrum-mongers, come across your path in every direction, and number frequently among their ranks some of the veriest scoundrels in all the Eastern world, who find the garb of the religious anchorite a convenient cloak to cover designs of the deepest rascality.

Even amongst these wandering devotees there are numberless orders and sub-sections, all of whom have well-defined and specific functions.

Some are known by marks peculiar to the worship of certain gods and goddesses emblazoned on some prominent part of their persons—breast, forehead, arms, &c., &c.

Many of these wandering mendicants doubtless belong to organised gangs, affiliated to each other by passwords and signs.

But in all large aggregations of humanity in the East they are sure to catch the eye by reason of their wild outlandish look, their strange manners or extravagant dress, or some distinctive difference which separates them from the common herd.

Then there is the counterpart of the old Roman augur or soothsayer, one of whom is attached to every *ménage* of any great importance in an Indian province.

There are beings like the old witch of Endor, who profess

Vincent Brooks, Day & Son. Lith.

Snake Charmers.

to be able "to summon spirits from the vasty deep," and whose services are more often called into requisition than the casual observer might imagine.

There is the Master of Ceremonies, who will take charge of any feast or merry-making you may wish to give to your retainers or friends. There is the *Bara Roopeah, i.e.* literally, the man of twelve changes, who will masquerade for you or your guests in twelve or more guises. He will assume all sorts of characters: make himself, by a Protean twist of countenance or readjustment of dress, a lady of fashion, a woman of low degree, a hireling dancer, a policeman, a planter, an angel or a demon, just as may suit the whim of the actor, or the requirements of the audience.

Then there is the professional well-sinker, who does nothing but sink wells, diving down in the water like a seal or an otter, scooping out the sand or soil from beneath the massive wooden plates from which the superincumbent girth of the well is made, thus allowing it to sink by slow degrees.

There is the bear leader, with his muzzled great brown bear from the mountain districts, trained to dance for the delectation of the village youngsters. There is the professional hawker—not the pedlar who peddles wares as with us Western nations, but the man who hawks—who trains the gerfalcon and the kestrel, and who is in fact the modern prototype of the old falconer of mediæval story.

The dyer, the potter, the weaver, the *Nooneah,* or saltpetre maker, the caster of nets, the weaver of the same, the mender of ditto, the village barber, the man who pares your nails, the professor of heraldry who will write you out a genealogy suitable to your circumstances and varying in splendour according to the amount of your remuneration, are of course common occupations, and such as might be expected.

All these, and numberless other castes and subdivisions of castes, ply their busy vocations in the populous East, and are all recognised under the iron thraldom of that curious

caste system which is at once the wonder and reproach, the shackle and the salvation, according as it is looked at by different minds, of the marvellous social cosmogony of the Hindoo world. But among all the multifarious occupations which come under the purview of an observant "dweller in tents" in an Indian district, none appeal more quickly to a man of keen observation than the numerous classes who make their livelihood (often very precarious) by ministering to the amusement of the people.

The musicians, the astrologers, the wizards, the enchanters, the quacks, the acrobats, the bear leaders, the prophets and soothsayers, the dancers and posture-makers, the snake-charmers, sword-swallowers, fire-eaters, bards, improvisatores, reciters of ancient legends, the singers, and the thousand-and-one Bohemians, who drift about in the by-wash of the great surging flood of humanity that rolls ceaselessly around the dweller in the East—all these appeal at once to your sense of the incongruous, to your sense of the picturesque, and being so utterly different from anything we have in our conventional Western civilisation, they challenge the attention, and attract the inquiry of the observer at once. Whole chapters could be written describing their peculiarities, whimsical instances connected with the pursuit of their vocations; and, indeed, many a time in my lonely life in India I have been under a deep debt of gratitude to many a one of these poor wandering performers, who have wooed me out of sad reflections or gloomy meditations by their mirth-inspiring antics, or their clever impersonations and really marvellous tricks. Of the jugglers alone, a whole book might be written.

The sleight of hand of the East is incomparably more finished and artistic, seeing that it is done in most cases with the aid of no paraphernalia whatever, than anything we are accustomed to in Europe.

But I never remember to have enjoyed a more hearty laugh than at the recital on one memorable occasion of a

most ridiculous story by one of these wandering professional *raconteurs*, and which I will, with the reader's permission, now endeavour to reproduce.

I cannot hope to give it with the same drawling mimetic art, which made it so funny in the narration the first time I heard it; but as I have never seen it in print, and think it is new to collectors of these quaint old tales, I venture to give it here.

One night, after a long, weary, hot day's hard work in one of my Belahie villages, trying to come to some settlement with a lot of refractory *assamies*, who would neither pay rent nor take advances, and who had subjected my good temper and patience to a prolonged and severe strain, I had gone out in the evening to have a shot at some ducks which had been observed by my servants in the vicinity of a shallow lagoon near my camp. I had found the brutes shy and wary. I had shot at several snipe and missed everyone, and had got bogged up to the middle in a quaking miry clinging morass. My gun had been badly cleaned, and was kicking like a borrowed horse. The fact is, everything had gone against me. My liver was out of order, I was in a despondent frame of mind, and—must I confess it?—in a desperately bad temper.

To add to my troubles, my dakman had not brought my usual mail from the head factory. I had nothing to read, and, saddest fate of all, had nothing to drink and was short of tobacco.

I had got back to the tents, bathed, had dinner and lay down on my camp bed, restless, discontented and weary, but withal in a very sleepless mood. The dogs were all tied up at some distance away, and had been fed by the *mehter* or sweeper. My servants had finished their evening meal, and with the points of their *chupkuns*—a sort of tight boddice—unloosed, were enjoying the *otium cum dignitate* of a well-earned rest, and were chatting together narrating the events of the day; when suddenly on my irritated nerves there

broke the sound of a cheery persistent voice, trolling the well-known patter, in a sing-song nasal tone, of one of these professional story-tellers.

My first impulse was to get up and kick the fellow out of the precincts of the camp.

I felt so thoroughly "hipped" myself, that I seemed to take it as a personal insult that anybody in such a weary hot night, amid all the depressing surroundings, should dare to be cheerful.

There must, however, have been some subtle magnetic influence or spell in the very tones of the fellow's voice; as presently, raising myself languidly on my elbow, I found myself surveying with some little interest, through the open sides of the tent, the appearance of the new-comer.

He was a grizzled, sun-dried, weather-beaten old fellow, clad in the most tattered raiment possible, having a greasy skull cap on his head, merry eyes peeping over a network of wrinkles on each cheek, a broken nose surmounting a gaping cavern of a mouth, in the inner excavations of which could be seen two or three yellow glimmering stumps, and altogether the man looked like a good-natured gnome, some such apparition as might have been expected to have jumped out bodily from a page of Hans Andersen; and before I well knew whether to forbid his nearer approach or not, he, seemingly quite oblivious of my presence, passed the door of the tent, and with an air of easy familiarity, making himself quite at home, squatted down by the side of my retainers, who were now wideawake, and gave the man all the hearty welcome due to an old acquaintance, and one who was evidently a well known character amongst them.

I lay back and watched.

The usual salutations passed. The new-comer, with the dexterous ease of a man who knows human nature thoroughly well, and as if by the exercise of some magic art, was presently the recipient of a bit of native leaf tobacco from

this one, a little *chunam* from that one, and betel nut from a third, and indeed all seemed anxious to press something upon him.

My old *bearer* gravely took the mouth-piece of his *hubble bubble* from his lips, and offered it to the old fellow, who took two or three whiffs.

The old Khansammah, or Butler, Mussulman though he was, came over with his attendant, from where they had been lying apart; and tying up the points of his *chupkun* as he advanced, he made the usual grave Mussulman's salutation, and stroking his beard with the air of one who is expecting to hear some good thing, he joined the gathering circle.

My *syce* and "*grass cuts,*" who had been busy combing their well-oiled locks and titivating themselves generally, suspended the operations of their toilet and gathered around. Even my grave and dignified old *moonshee* seemed to have felt the impulse of some subtle charm, for he too, with one or two of the village patwarris, or accountants, came up in their reverent fashion, with their flowing white robes around them, and gave a pleasant nod of welcome to the merry-looking little dried chip, who seemed so suddenly to have become the cynosure of all eyes. By this time my megrims had almost vanished. I had forgotten all about my liver, and I found myself sitting up on my pallet, with my ears and my senses on the *qui vive*, in the endeavour to find out what was going on.

Through the half-open *Khanats*, I could see without being myself perceived.

The servants seemed to fancy that I must be sound asleep, and after cracking sundry jokes which seemed to put all his audience in a good humour, a supplicatory chorus went up from every voice, beseeching him to tell them a story.

Now I cannot hope, as I have said, to reproduce the action, the gestures, the facial expression, the inimitable drollery of the *raconteur*.

The man was a born actor. Two or three times I found myself heaving with silent laughter, as he illustrated the various points of his narration. But this was the story—and you must just take it in my halting imperfect way; and indeed my only object in occupying your time by giving it, is because I think the whole picture is one peculiarly characteristic of tent life in an Indian frontier district, and may serve a useful purpose in bringing strongly before the mental eye of the reader, some presentment of the living reality of the life we lead in the remote villages of such an Indian planting district as I have been endeavouring to describe.

The old fellow had a curious habit, when he seemed to be searching for a word, of making a quaint clicking sound with his tongue, then he would cock his head to one side like a magpie. He would wag his old noddle, loll his tongue out from amid his gleaming stumps, moistening his dry lips, leeringly roll his beady twinkling eyes around, winking at his audience; shrug his shoulders like a French dancing-master, sway his body in unison with the incidents of the story; and altogether seemed to mesmerize his audience into complete accord with the varying developments of his plot; and to tell the honest truth, I must confess that I never heard a story better told, sweeping as the assertion may appear, and I never enjoyed any narration with a keener relish, than that of this cunning old artist as he related the following tale. Thus he began:

"There was once in a village, which I will not name, a man whom I shall call Petumber." I must give it in the following words but naturally the story loses a great deal of force by the translation.

"Petumber was a great strong soft-hearted fellow, who was the best runner and the best wrestler, but the kindest-hearted young man in the village, always willing to help a neighbour in a difficulty."

And here followed a long description of the various kindly acts Petumber was wont to do to his neighbours.

For instance this was one. An old woman who was shrewdly suspected of being a witch, had a favourite nanny-goat which had fallen into a well, and at the risk of his life Petumber had been lowered down, and rescued the unfortunate beast.

"Well, time went on, and, as will happen to young men, Petumber fell in love—with whom think ye? MAHABOOBUN, the loveliest fay of all the village, daughter of a rich freeholder; and being a finely-made, good-looking young man, having a fair patrimony, numerous cows and a fair amount of plough bullocks, his suit was looked upon with some degree of favour by Mahaboobun's relations, and he had reason to believe he was not altogether uninteresting to the fair Mahaboobun herself."

But there was an Iago in the case.

Of course he was the exact antithesis of Petumber. This rival was a swarthy, beetled-browed, bandy-legged character, whose name was Bal Khrishun, and he also had set his affections on the peerless Mahaboobun. In the wrestling matches in the village arena, things were so equally balanced, that although Petumber was the stronger of the two, Bal Khrishun knew more tricks of the ring, and sometimes was able to snatch a dubious victory from the broad-chested, open-hearted Petumber by cunning and stratagem, but never by fair and open play.

Of course Bal Khrishun was painted as a very Machiavelli—a double-faced, cowardly, chicken-hearted, scheming scoundrel.

Then came a recountal of all the black deeds he had done.

He was a usurer; he was constantly fomenting strife among parties in the village, and altogether quite up to the usual three-volume touch as the villain of the piece.

He seemed however to have acquired some strange malign

ascendency over the gentle Mahaboobun, by working on her fears and her timid half-confessed preference for Petumber, inasmuch as he continually let drop veiled threats and vague hints as to some evil that he could bring over Petumber, and he skilfully contrived to make the poor girl to some extent put herself in a false position by his cunning strategy, that she appeared to listen to his addresses, while in reality she only dissembled, to appease if she might his malignant nature.

This part of the story was very cleverly worked out, and the old man managed to bring his hearers, and myself too, to a perfect pitch of interest as he described how on one occasion Petumber came upon Bal Khrishun making overtures to his lady love, which she with tears feebly endeavoured to resist, and Petumber's righteous indignation being roused at the sight of Mahaboobun's evident perturbation, he smote his cowardly rival to the earth, and left him muttering dire threats of revenge.

Subsequently the two young lovers were united in the sacred bonds of wedlock, and Bal Khrishun registered his vow of vengeance, and commenced to scheme against the wedded peace of the loving couple.

By a series of skilful combinations, by hints and innuendoes and cunningly-contrived stratagems, he succeeded in making Mahaboobun rather jealous of her lord.

Then he contrived to beguile Petumber away to a distant part of the country, on a pretext that a distant relation was at the point of death, and wished to leave Petumber some money.

Meanwhile a kindly fairy in the shape of the old woman, whose goat had been rescued from the well, appeared on the scene, and began to play a hand in the game.

She had not been an unobservant spectator of the duplicity that was being practised by the wily and unscrupulous, yet cowardly Bal Khrishun.

Petumber's rascally rival had in fact arranged to carry off Mahaboobun *vi et armis.*

A litter borne by some "lewd fellows of the baser sort," who were in his pay, and attached to his service, was to be in readiness in the mango *tope,* at a given hour, and under the pretext that Petumber had sustained a severe accident, and was wishful to see his loved Mahaboobun before he died, she was to be inveigled into the litter away from her home, under the charge of the seemingly good Samaritan, the perfidious Bal Khrishun.

The old woman, however, had got an inkling of what was going on, and intercepting Petumber on his journey, gave him sufficient warning of the plot that was being hatched against his domestic peace, to make him at once change his plans and hurry back.

All this was sketched out with infinite art, by the merry old story-teller, and I had, as I hope my reader has, become quite interested in the development of the plot.

My group of servants were listening with open mouths. Now and then they would laugh heartily at some quaint allusion, or some skilful touch thrown off by the story-teller, and anon they would hold their breath as the interest of the drama thickened.

And so we come back to the habitation of Petumber, which was, as Eastern houses go, large and commodious, with several apartments, and attached to the sleeping-room, one of those cool, retiring resorts, known as the *ghoosal khana,* or bath-room. Around one side of this room were ranged a number of tall, portly brass water pots or jars, quite such as we have been accustomed to read about in the good old story of Ali Baba or the Forty Thieves—just such jars as Ali Baba hid the robbers in, when he scalded them to death with boiling oil.

Well, the wily Bal Khrishun, dressed in his best, and taking advantage of Petumber's absence, came up to put his

nefarious scheme into execution. With I suppose a not unnatural coquetry, the fair Mahaboobun, mindful that this was an old flame of hers, and not wishing to be too hard upon him, met him with the utmost kindness, and this so raised the wicked desires and vain hopes of the evil-minded Bal Khrishun, that he began to venture on rather dangerous retrospections and began to press his claims upon Mahaboobun's regard, with a slightly greater degree of amorous ardour than was strictly compatible with the relationship which actually existed between them.

Just at this critical moment, with his heart full of conflicting emotions, boiling with indignation at the duplicity and trickery to which he had so nearly been a victim; having been fully informed of the plot that was being hatched against his domestic peace by the treacherous Bal Khrishun; Petumber came rushing up to the house in a state of pent-up fury; and Bal Khrishun's coward conscience taking alarm at the sight of the indignant husband striding towards the house, he exclaimed in accents of horror-stricken inquietude, "*Arree Bapre Bap*,—Behold Petumber!! What is to be done?!! Alas! I am a dead man, and you are a ruined woman, unless you hide me from the wrath of your incensed husband." The situation was too critical to allow of calm reflection or philosophic thought.

Mahaboobun, not unnaturally, felt to some extent the prickings of conscience, and with a woman's natural wish to avoid bloodshed and strife, acting upon the impulse of the moment, she hurried Bal Khrishun into the *ghoosal khana*, crammed him down with trembling and hurried fingers among the row of brass pots, and told him for Heaven's sake to assume the character of a brass pot himself, as his very life depended upon it, and if he did not want to ruin her altogether, she would dissemble and find some way of getting him out of this perplexing predicament. Then with a parting injunction to keep up his assumed character, and with a very

portentous reminder that Petumber would not hesitate at taking life when once his passions were roused, she left the cowering, trembling, cowardly rascal in the semi-obscurity of the damp *ghoosal khana,* and hurried out with palpitating heart to meet her incensed lord.

His first word convinced her that concealment was useless, and that he knew all that had transpired.

With choking accents of jealous rage, he demanded that she should produce the miscreant who was endeavouring to sap the foundations of his domestic tranquillity; and she, beseeching him to restrain his impetuosity, made a clean breast of it, and while heaping every epithet of womanly scorn on the head of the miserable Bal Khrishun, whose double-dealing and vile treachery she now clearly saw, she so contrived to reassure her husband of her fidelity and love, that the first quick mad current of his wrath was turned aside, and he determined not to take the life of his rival, but to teach him a lesson which he would not readily forget.

You must bear in mind that all this was recounted as an actual fact.

The story-teller, if I have succeeded in impressing the reader sufficiently with an estimate of his wonderful skill, had now reached the very climax of his dramatic art.

The auditors were agape with eager interest and attention.

Being informed by the clinging wife that the hated rival was even now in the *ghoosal khana,* Petumber strode to the aperture in the wall leading into the inner darkened room, swept aside the drapery which depended from the arch, and bending upwards his brawny leg he took from its place upon his shapely foot the heavy wooden sandal which he wore (a high-heeled, brass-bound, heavy *gadbadunee,* which is worn by travellers when going through the jungles. It has a large wooden stud, which goes between the great toe and the next one to it, and is very useful in keeping the wearer's bare foot

off the ground in going through grass or jungle where snakes might be numerous).

With this in his hand, the angry Petumber, peering into the obscurity, saw the green glare in the eyes of the abject, cowering, and hated Bal Khrishun.

His teeth were chattering with fright, and knowing that his very life depended on his remaining undiscovered, he bent all his thoughts to keep up the assumption of the character of the brass pot, and determined at all hazards to act as if he really were one.

Of course he was in ignorance that Mahaboobun had already divulged his secret.

He felt, naturally enough, that his very life depended on his seeming to be for the time a very brass pot, and nothing else.

And here the original conception and intense dry humour of the situation comes in.

As quick as thought, Petumber, with unerring aim, launched his heavy sandal straight between the eyes of the luckless Bal Khrishun.

The crack started the blood flowing from his unlucky sconce, but he, true to his assumed character, responded with a loud, sonorous, reverberative "Tung!—tung—ng—ng!"—as the sandal rattled on his skull.

Petumber, thinking that he was being mocked, fancying that he was being made a butt of, and experiencing a redoubled intensity of wrath, took up the other sandal, and sent it flying after its fellow, propelled with all the force of his powerful arm, right between the eyes once again of the hapless Bal Khrishun. This time he could not altogether suppress a stifled groan; but, shaking with terror, and still true to the character he had assumed, he again sang out "Tung—ng—ng—ng!" The wrath of Petumber now knew no bounds.

Forgetful of prudence and his promise to his wife, and all

else, except to thrash his adversary, he seized a stout bamboo stick which stood handy against the wall, and rushed upon the prostrate Bal Khrishun and with lusty whacks began to belabour his luckless carcase. Still keeping to his self-imposed character, the hapless Lothario began rolling about, imitating a brass pot when it is half full of water and overturned upon the floor.

At every whack "Tung—ng, glug—glug!—tung—ng, glug glug!" came from his miserable lips, until at length human nature could stand it no longer; and after having his body whacked and battered, and his nose and face bruised beyond all recognition, he emitted a dismal yell, and rushed from the house as if all the furies were after him, and was never again seen in the village.

There is such a vein of humour pervading the whole story that I have thought it well to give it at some length. The general idea, I know, is that the village Hindoo is rather a melancholy, saturnine creature, with no sense of humour, but any one who has lived as long as I have amongst the merry residents of the upland districts of Purneah and Bhaugulpore, would soon know how erroneous an estimate this is of native character.

With this, however, I think we may take our leave of the hapless Bal Khrishun, and only hope that Petumber and Mahaboobun lived to a good old age, and saw troops of children growing around them, in peace and quiet prosperity.

It is only fair to state that I gave the narrator a handsome *bucksheesh*, and certainly felt quite indebted to him for one of the pleasantest evenings I ever remember to have spent in my tent life.

Perhaps it would not be out of place to conclude this chapter by another rather good story which illustrates the marvellous way in which Western ideas are making progress in the minds of the natives.

It is all very well for half-informed critics at a distance

to decry the efforts of missionaries, of schoolmasters, civil servants, planters and merchants, and of the many institutions which, under the fostering beneficence of British rule, are slowly but surely effecting a real revolution in native modes of life and thought. The influence of Western civilisation is evident in every department of industry in India.

The very food and clothing of this most interesting and conservative people is being affected by the introduction of Western fashions.

All the modern appliances in the arts and sciences are being rapidly introduced.

Municipal institutions flourish in most of the towns, and the criminal law is being administered under a penal code, which, for comprehensiveness and excellence in its provisions, can hardly be excelled in any part of the civilised world. With all this, however, the contrasts one meets with in every Indian district are, as I have already observed, very striking.

Within the sound of the shrill whistle of the locomotive, you will find a temple dedicated to some horrible eight-armed idol, or possibly decorated with the most obscene sculptures, and consecrated to the procreative forces in nature, within the shelter of whose courtyard deeds of infamy are perpetrated, incredible almost in their horrible obscenity.

These are the dark shades of Paganism, but happily evidences are not wanting to show that the bright beams of "the Sun of Righteousness" are splintering and shivering the gloomy mass of shadow.

Within a few hundred yards of the busy clank of the engine-room of an indigo factory you may haply find a reputed witch, a witch-finder, a wizard, a magician, an astrologer, or one of these strange and curious castes, a description of which I gave in the opening of this chapter, and the simple villagers are quite ready still to believe that through the *mantras* or spells of some of these uncanny

practitioners, he or she can blight their crops, destroy their cattle, influence their destiny, cast spells, work divinations, and "raise the devil generally."

The Brahmins are of course the reputedly holy and sacred caste.

As among the Levites of old there were different grades, so are there different kinds of Brahmins. There are wandering Brahmins, who lead a lazy, vagabondish, itinerant life, certain of a meal wherever they halt for the night, and sure to be made a guest, by virtue of their caste, at any house where they may sojourn, at any time whenever the whim seizes them.

Others are attached to various temples, hold and cultivate the various temple lands, amass wealth from the rich endowments, and, like "Jeshurun" of old, "wax fat," although they get too lazy even to "kick." Others again officiate as family priests, *purohits* as they are called.

These get attached to wealthy families, and perform a *rôle* corresponding exactly to that of a domestic chaplain in a wealthy nobleman's family at home.

Brahminism under various modifications is no doubt the religion of the vast mass of Hindoos generally.

The sanctity of the Brahmin, the necessity for his priestly office in all the duties of life, forms the fundamental basis of the gigantic system of sacerdotal supremacy which their superior cunning and organisation have established during the long course of centuries. To refuse a Brahmin food is to call down condign punishment from the skies. To beat him is to consign yourself to an eternity of woe; but to spill his blood, or even to be the remote cause of having his blood spilt, brings down upon your head eternal wrath, which is shared by all your relations who have preceded or may come after you, and actually includes even your neighbours in the evil consequences of such awful impiety. Such is the orthodox faith *re* Brahmins.

An amusing incident in exemplification of the fact I have just stated, that Western ideas are beginning to permeate the masses, and an illustration of "the little leaven that will finally leaven the whole lump" of Oriental superstition and credulity, occurred not long ago.

One of these oleaginous, self-complacent, peripatetic, sacerdotal "loafers," on a begging expedition, like a mendicant friar of old, came one day and set him down at the door of a grain-seller who was reputed to be wealthy, but was also suspected of being rather heterodox—in other words a freethinker, and a dissident from the old school of Hindoo thought.

The lazy, fat Brahmin was determined to test the *Bunneah's* orthodoxy, and, sitting down by the door, demanded, with all the haughty imperiousness of a high-caste Brahmin, some refreshment.

The *Bunneah,* however, had determined that he would no longer pander to this constant drain upon his resources, for he remembered that he had a family to support, and taxes to pay, and had to work hard himself for his living.

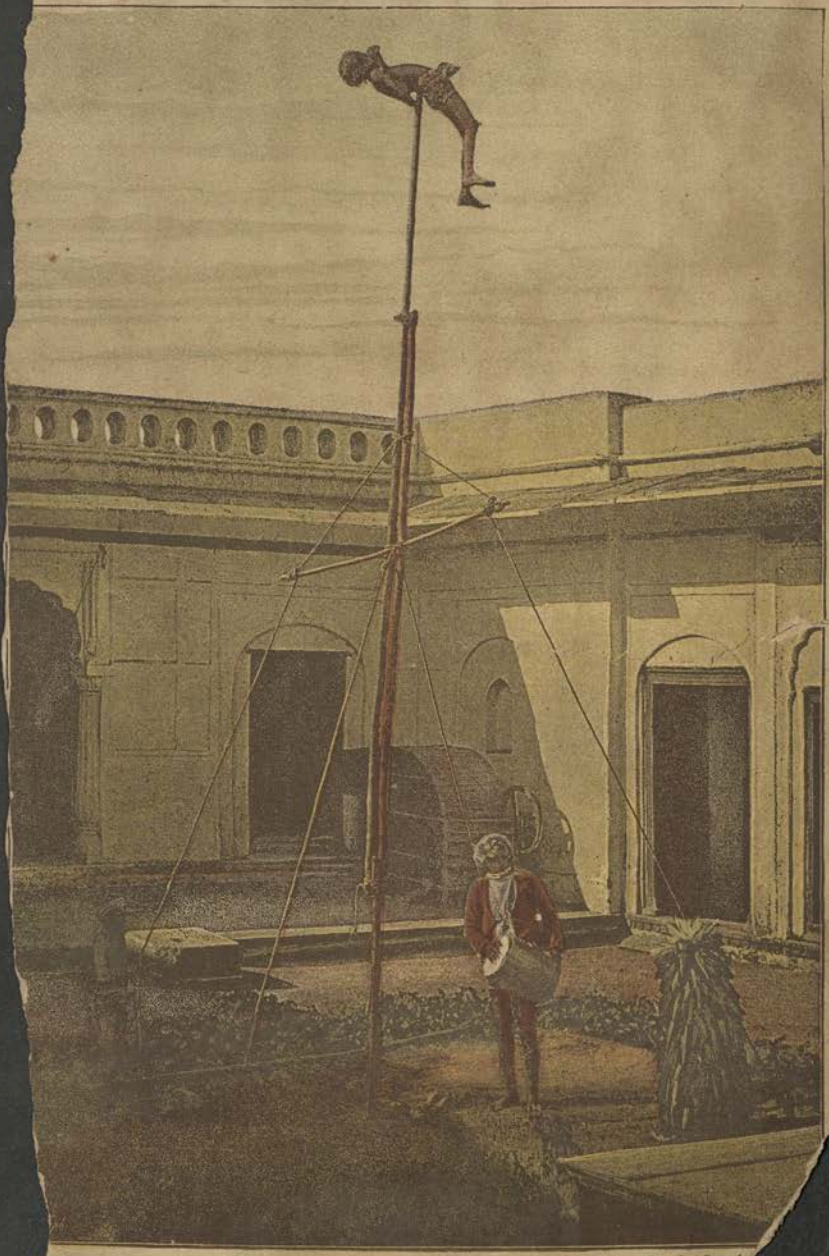
He was not averse to alms-giving in the abstract, and indeed, as a rule, the better classes of Hindoos are conspicuously benevolent.

So he did not stint his charity when a deserving object was presented to his notice, but he justly thought that this perpetual blackmail levied by able-bodied but indolent priests, be they *Byragee, Moulvie,* or *Brahmin,* was but a premium on laziness, and altogether "too much of a good thing."

So that, being in this mood, it was in vain that the Brahmin clamoured for a meal.

The *Bunneah,* like John Grumly's wife in the song, "heard as if he heard him not."

Others of the more pious or less enlightened villagers pressed their presents of food on the clamorous Brahmin,



Vincent Brooks, Day &

Acrobats.

but his obstinacy and priestly intolerance were now roused, and he was determined to vindicate his arrogant pretensions, and break the spirit of the recalcitrant *Bunneah.*

So passed the first day—hierarchical statement of right on the one hand, against modern heterodox defiance on the other.

On the second day the Brahmin, still persistent, but now really hungry, poured forth all the curses and comminations of his stock-in-trade upon the *Bunneah's* devoted head, accompanying these with *mantras,* muttered spells, and open objurgations.

Still obdurate was the Oriental John Knox.

Finding that the *Bunneah* did not care so much as he expected for his ban and malison, the chagrined Brahmin began to lacerate his arms, cutting himself like one of the priests of Baal, no doubt thinking that the awful consequences resulting from having the blood of a Brahmin at his door would break the proud spirit of the grain-dealer, and force him into submission.

Not a bit of it.

The hard-hearted *Bunneah* was determined to maintain the position which he had taken, and although the roused and horror-stricken neighbours crowded around him, and piteously implored him to make his peace with the Brahmin, and so avert the dire consequences, so they imagined, of having sacred blood spilt among them—that, in fact, their unhappy village might not be consigned with all its inhabitants to dreadful pains and penalties. Still, however, the undaunted grain-seller turned a deaf ear to their imploring entreaties.

On the third day the oily old priest, now goaded to desperation, possibly maddened into an excess of Oriental fury—one of those paroxysms which come upon Easterns in moments of strong excitement—and thinking, by a bold move—a *coup de main,* as it were—to terrify the *Bunneah*

into submission, he, after solemnly abjuring the obstinate heretic by the names of all the gods, calling down upon him and upon all the villagers the dire penalties due to one who was guilty of the death of a heaven-descended Brahmin, made for a deep well that was situated in the courtyard, and (the proceedings having attracted nearly all the inhabitants), amid horror-stricken cries from the crowd of onlookers, and agonising wailings and a thrill of superstitious dread, plunged down sheer into the gloomy depths of the well.

The pious villagers were paralysed with horror.

The men tore their hair and their garments, the women screamed and beat their breasts, and every one in horror-stricken accents shrieked aloud.

Would nothing move the obduracy of this determined old iconoclast?

Yes; the *Bunneah* seemed at last to relent.

His face betrayed conflicting emotions.

He rushed to the well, the excited crowd gazing with intense interest at his every action.

Bending over the well, in whose humid depths the floating form of the discomfited priest was dimly discernible, he besought the Brahmin not to drown himself.

You can fancy how the heart of the half-submerged sacerdotalist leaped for joy at having at length, as he exultantly thought, established the triumph of orthodoxy.

Behold, now, the reward of his persistency had come after all his long fasting, humiliation, and suffering!

Unwinding his long, strong silken *puggree*, the *Bunneah* lowers it slowly down.

With trembling eager fingers it is grasped by the Brahmin.

The *Bunneah* hauls up the spluttering unfortunate; but when he reached the top of the well, guess the awful revulsion of feeling, the supreme dumbfounderment he must have felt, as the strong, vigorous fingers of the *Bunneah* tightened on his wrists, and deftly tied these with the

puggree which had just served as a draw-rope; and then, amid the outcries and lamentations of the shrieking crowd, he hauled the half-drowned and wholly crestfallen Brahmin off to the nearest police station, and charged him under the Penal Code with an attempt to commit suicide.

The sequel is short.

Under the Indian Penal Code this offence is visited with a minimum punishment of two years imprisonment.

As the case was so clear, the full penalty was inflicted.

This did more to break down the absurd pretensions of the Brahmins in that village than many a long argument could ever have done.

But this is only one of a hundred indirect ways in which missionary teaching and English example are bearing fruit.

Doubtless the Brahmin reflected in his cell on the mutability of human affairs, and must have come to the orthodox conclusion that "the Church was going to the dogs" altogether.

If I might be permitted the obvious reflection, is not this an expressed idea with sacerdotalists in other latitudes, and with priests who are not Brahmins?

Take some of our advanced ritualists, for instance, with their vain equipments and foolish ceremonies, really offering a "stone" to the people in place of the Bread of Life, giving the "serpent" of priestly arrogance and pretentiousness instead of the wholesome "fish" of Divine Truth, and estranging from the Church the sympathies and support of all those in the community who, like our *bunneah*, are perhaps not the least advanced and intelligent in their ideas. Possibly so. But on these matters I am old-fashioned.

The moral is perhaps worthy of some little consideration.

Lest some of my readers may think the story of the Brahmin and the Bunneah overdrawn, and as further illustrative of the change in the mental attitude of the more

progressive and liberal-minded natives towards their old faith and old caste exactions, let me give an extract or two from a most interesting book written by Sahib Chunder Bose, of Calcutta, himself formerly, I believe, a high caste Hindoo, and which is well worth the perusal of any one who wishes to see "The Hindoos as they are." Indeed, that is the title of the book, published in 1881. London: Edward Stanford, 55 Charing Cross, and Newman and Co., Calcutta.

At page 108, speaking of Doorga Poojah Festival, the learned Baboo writes:

"On the third or last day of the Poojah, being the ninth day of the increase of the moon, the prescribed ritualistic ceremonies having been performed, the officiating priests make the *hoam* and *dhukinanto*, a rite, the meaning of which is to present farewell offerings to the goddess for one year, adding in a suitable prayer that she will be graciously pleased to forgive the present shortcomings on the part of her devotees, and vouchsafe to them her blessings in this world as well as in the world to come. This," says the Baboo, "is a very critical time for the priests, because the *finale* of the ceremony involves the important question of their respective gains." He then shows how the priests—generally three in number—fight among themselves for the biggest share of the fees, and will not complete the ceremony by pronouncing the last prayer till the knotty question of the distribution of fees is satisfactorily settled. He thus proceeds: "It is necessary to add here that the presents of rupees which the numerous guests offered to the goddess during the three days of the Poojah, go to swell the fund of the priest, to which the worshipper of the idol must add a separate sum, without which this act of merit loses its final reward in a future state. *The devotee must satisfy the cupidity of the priests or run the risk of forfeiting divine mercy.* When the problem is ultimately solved in favour of the officiating priest

who actually makes the Poojah, and sums of money are put into the hands of the Brahmins, the last prayer is read. It is not perhaps generally known," adds the writer, "that the income the Indian ecclesiastics thus derive from this source supports them for the greater part of the year, with a little gain in money or kind from the land they own."

At page 155, speaking of the Saraswati Poojah, the following very suggestive sentences occur: "In every *chatoospati*, or school, the Brahmin Pundit and his pupils worship this goddess with religious strictness. The Pundit, setting up an image, invites all his patrons, neighbouring friends and acquaintances on this occasion. Every one who attends must make a present of one or a half rupee to the goddess, and returns home *with the hollow benediction of the Brahmin.*" (The italics are mine.) "To so miserable a strait have the learned Pundits been reduced of late years, that they anxiously look forward to the anniversary of this festival as a small harvest of gain to them as the authoritative ministers of the goddess. They make from fifty to one hundred rupees a year by the celebration of this Poojah, which keeps them for six months; should any of their friends fail to make the usual present to the goddess, they are sure to demand it as a right." And in a pregnant footnote he adds:

"A gift once made to a Brahmin must be continued from year to year till the donor dies; in some cases it is tenable from one generation to another."

At page 187 he says: "If Manu were to visit Bengal now, his indignation and amazement would know no bounds in witnessing the sacerdotal class reduced to the humiliating position of a servile, cringing and mercenary crowd of men. Their original prestige has suffered a total shipwreck. Generally speaking, a Brahmin of the present day is practically a Soodra (the most inferior class) of the past age, irretrievably sunk in honour and dignity. Indeed it was one of the curses of the Vedic period that to be a Brahmin of the present, *Kali*

yagu, would be an impersonation of corruption, baseness and venality."

And he sums up by saying:

"He" (the Brahmin) "can no longer plume himself on his religious purity and mental superiority, once so pre-eminently characteristic of the order. The spread of English education has sounded the death-knell of his spiritual ascendency. In short, his fate is doomed; he must bear or must forbear, as seems to him best. The tide of improvement will continue to roll on uninterruptedly," etc., etc.

So much for Baboo Sahib Chunder Bose. His view is undoubtedly the correct one in great measure, and little wonder need be felt that the erstwhile "lordly Brahmin" bitterly hates the white-faced beefeaters from across the "Black Water," and would hail the day with glad acclaim that would see the last of our red-coats swept into the river or the sea.

The classes like the Bunneah, however—the trading, industrial and cultivating classes—do not, I am willing and glad to believe, share in this dislike of British rule; and after all, these are *the* people, the mainstay of any system of government; and our chiefest and proudest boast as conquerors of India is, that we have consolidated the rule we won by the sword, through the grateful recognition of an emancipated people, that we seek to do justly by them, and endeavour to reign in their affections, and govern by their free good will.

CHAPTER

PERILS BY FLOOD

Native characteristics — Pioneer work — Riverside villages — [illegible] of the flood—The cousins—Bad blood—A murderous blow [illegible] ene—We must find the body—The boat—The river in flood [illegible] pt away by the torrent—Shooting the rapids—Straining every [illegible] ve to avoid the main stream—One spot of refuge amid the raging waters—The deserted cattle camp—The floating island—Teeming with fugitive life—Unexpected flotsam—A babe in strange company—The mangy tiger—Rescue—Return to factory.

It will surely be pretty evident now, that in these wild outlying districts, life presents many tragic features, and with all the savage elements of paganism that exist, there is no lack of sensation. The difficulty indeed is to present pictures of frontier life in such guise as not to excite the incredulity of the ordinary stay-at-home reader.

Many stories of the *hunting-field* I have purposely abstained from telling, knowing that they would be received with derisive unbelief. Tragedies of "horrid cruelty" and of the most melodramatic character are of daily occurrence in the village life of the East—at all events, in such a wild district as that in which I lived for some years.

Opportunity is almost daily given to the administrator of the affairs of a large indigo concern, demanding the most decisive and prompt action, and calling into play every atom of reserve strength of character with which he may be endowed.

Indeed, a weak man is of no use as an indigo planter.

There are no keener observers of character than the astute, calculating, scheming denizens of a frontier village, whose native wits are polished to preternatural brightness in the atmosphere of constant intrigue with which they are always surrounded.

They are ever on the alert to defeat some cunning plan concocted against themselves or their neighbours by some inimical agency, and they are constantly cudgelling and racking their brains to devise some dodge to be put into effect against the factory or neighbouring landholder, or some hereditary or caste enemy over whom they wish to take some unfair advantage.

Doubtless there are exceptions.

Happily there are many large districts where the farming avocations of the peasantry are pursued as peacefully and honestly as in the Lothians or in Devonshire; but it must be remembered that for many years Lutchmeepore factory, which was now under my management, had been almost entirely neglected. It had been under the management of natives. Rents had fallen into arrears, village cultivation had been given up, the whole population had become disaffected; and when I first went there, a small standing army had been kept, of between two and three hundred fighting men, who regularly harried the country, and were a perpetual source of annoyance to the more peacefully-disposed villagers, and were, in fact, a regular horde of human locusts doing no good either to the factory or to themselves.

I need not repeat the story here which I have already told, of how patiently I strove to bring back a better state of things.

My work as a pioneer planter "on the Nepaul frontier" I have already spoken of, but it is only proper that I should again impress the mind of the reader with a knowledge of this state of things, else he might accuse me of trying to fill

up sensational records, when as a matter of fact I am only extracting from my diary the points of greatest interest which seem to me to illustrate some of the wilder phases of "Tent Life in Tigerland."

One morning, during the rains in 1874, a man came running into the factory to tell me that a foul murder had been committed in the small village of Khoohee, near the *Ghat*, and asking me to hurry down to make an inquiry. Accordingly, getting on the elephant, I started for the scene.

It appeared that most of the villagers had turned out, as was their custom in nearly all these riverside villages during floods, to save the wreckage which was being brought down by the flood waters from the villages higher up.

In these great Koosee *dyaras* or riverine plains, of course firewood is very scarce, but during the floods enormous quantities of drift wood come floating down stream, sometimes valuable logs of cedar or *Sal*, or other hard woods, that have been cut in the *Terai* during the dry weather, and have been lying on the banks of the creeks there until the annual rains would fill the channels and allow the rafts to be floated down.

The hardier riverside villagers then look upon these floods as quite a favourable harvest time for them, and sometimes they actually secure boats which have broken adrift, occasionally floating granaries full of grain, and other flotsam.

As the Koosee is a most Arctic stream, hot weather causes the snows to melt in the distant highlands, and the volume of water thereby set free comes down with a sudden impetuous rush, and being swollen by the heavy rains which at this season flood the *Terai*, the river sometimes completely overtops its banks, and rushes tumultuously through cultivated lands, making fresh channels for itself, sweeping

away whole villages, devastating whole tracts of country and even sometimes cutting away big factories, and thus in many of the poorer villages a class of hardy semi-savage men exist, not unlike the wreckers of our own wild coast in former times, and it was to such a village that I was now making my way.

Two men, named respectively Ragoober and Kunchun, both of the *Mandal* caste, had got into a dispute over a log of wood which had come down the river, and which they had both seized simultaneously.

They happened to be cousins, but were not any the better friends on that account.

Ragoober was a great big powerful fellow, had often been to the factory, and was rather a favourite of mine; as, although a bluff, outspoken rather rough-and-ready fellow, I had always found him fairly honest, and ever ready to give me assistance in any of my hunting expeditions. In fact, he had often brought me news of "tiger," and I was exceedingly sorry now to hear that in the struggle which had taken place between the two men for the possession of the flotsam log, Kunchun, according to the testimony of several witnesses, had struck Ragoober over the head with a jagged piece of wood, both men being up to their middle in the water at the time, and then pushing the end of the log against Ragoober's chest, the poor fellow had missed his footing, had fallen back into the turbid stream, and in a moment had disappeared in its rapid flood.

Of course an outcry was at once raised.

The village *Chowkedhar* had rushed up to the factory to tell me, and Kunchun had retired to his own house, where several of his relations were watching over his safety, and a crowd of the village friends of Ragoober were waiting outside, ready either to cut him down if they could get hold of him, or hand him over to myself or to the police, whichever might make their appearance first.

I was met, as usual, with the customary voluble outburst of excited comment and narration; each one trying to give his version of the story first, and out of the Babel of conflicting sounds, I arrived at a pretty correct understanding of the facts.

Every narrator was unanimous in stating that Kunchun had struck the fatal blow, that poor Ragoober's head had been split open; and several witnesses testified that they had seen the poor fellow, with blood streaming from a wound in his head, throw up his arms and fall back into the swift swollen torrent that was rushing rapidly past.

It immediately struck me that the man might only have been stunned, and as I knew him to be a powerful swimmer, in that event I knew there was a possible chance of his escaping, as he might have been swept into some eddy and then have contrived to crawl ashore; and wishful to divert the attention of the missing man's friends and relatives from the object of their revengeful fury, I suggested this phase of the matter, and I was rather glad to find that they took it up at once.

Several of the young men immediately rushed off to secure a boat, which was moored to the tall bamboo pole which marked the ford in ordinary times, but which was now deep in water reaching nearly up to the men's necks.

The boat was one of the usual flat-bottom high-stemmed river craft, possibly capable of carrying twenty or thirty tons of produce, and having a little thatched hut-like cabin in the middle.

They brought the boat down to where my elephant was standing, and I got in, accompanied by half-a-dozen lusty fellows, and pushing off with our long bamboos, we were soon fairly out in the swift stream. Keeping a careful watch as we went along, we commenced to make a search for the body of poor Ragoober, scarcely daring to hope that we would ever see him alive again, but still knowing it to be important for

the purpose of investigation, that the body, dead or alive, should be found.

Well! we did *not* get the body of poor Ragoober. He was never seen again.

Doubtless he made a meal for some grim alligator, or possibly the jackals by the river's brink may have had an unholy feast off his poor carcase. But in searching for the dead, we succoured the living. A most strange and romantic adventure befell us.

We succeeded in saving one innocent life, that but for Kunchun's murderous blow must have perished by an awful fate. But you shall hear. I had never seen the Koosee in such a flood. Great rolling undulations of water—yellow turbid billows—were hurrying madly down towards the mighty Ganges.

For leagues on either side, the yellow flood sped swiftly past.

Far away, almost on the verge of the horizon, little indistinct specks betokened the locality of some tall mango grove, or bamboo clump, or village, perched high above the level of the plain, but for miles and miles between, a tremendous volume of tortured and distracted water, swished and swirled, and rushed madly down to the far distant plains; there to mingle with the kindred waters of "Gunga's sacred stream." Our lumbering boat, albeit specially constructed for such river navigation, was swept along, as might have been an infant in a giant's grasp.

We had instantly lost all control over our own motion, and the men could only, by putting out their long heavy bamboo poles on each side, endeavour to keep our unwieldy craft stem on to the course of the river.

Sometimes we spinned round and round like a teetotum. Anon we plunged, and rocked and wildly swayed as the fierce current tossed us hither and thither.

Had we come upon a snag, which was not at all an

unlikely thing, we would have been drowned to a dead certainty.

Never in all my life did I feel how absolutely impotent and helpless is man in the presence of the fierce uncontrolled forces of nature. My men, although accustomed to the river, born on its banks and acquainted with its every mood, were, I could see, terribly frightened, and I am ashamed to confess that I bitterly repented having set foot in the boat, and wished myself well out of the adventure.

Down we went—round we spinned—rocking, rolling, heaving, rushing at headlong pace.

Past the factory like an arrow we went—I could see the smoke from the boiling house loom up like a dark cloud before me for one minute, and the next it was far behind us.

Speedily it faded from our view.

Very soon I could see the tall feathery bamboos, marking the site of my *gomastah's* village.

Next the roar of the flood waters rushing in mad exodus from the swollen Dhaus, and leaping up like hungry wolves upon their prey, as they met the fiercer rush of the swollen Koosee, made us set our teeth and hold our breath, to meet the impending shock; and we knew that our lives depended on the result of the next few minutes.

The boat rose and fell on the crest of the tumultuous waves; dashed down again as some frail shallop might be in the midst of an angry sea,—and for a few thrilling minutes our lives were not worth the purchase of an obolus,—and then we glided calmly and softly into a long smooth reach of water, the eddy or back wash from the Dhaus,—and we breathed easier once more.

The men strained now their swarthy bodies,—tossing their black hair back from their wet shoulders—their gleaming eye-balls and set teeth showing how tense and strung was every nerve, as they strained and laboured to propel the boat

away from the mad centre of the rushing river, to the safer neighbourhood of the hither shore.

But presently we seemed to have got over the shallow bar, and were again whisked by the impetuous rush of another current, and away once more we were hurried on our mad career, and now I really began to feel exceedingly alarmed, as to the ultimate issue of our desperate progress.

The men however assured me that there was not so much danger now, and I found that they had been in a terrible fright lest we should be caught and overturned in the ugly "rip" or rapid that had been caused by the meeting of the Dhaus waters and the main stream.

They told me that now for some ten or twelve miles, as far as beyond Fusseah, there was likely to be deep water, and though, of course, it was dangerous in such a flood, it was not nearly so bad as what we had just passed through.

One of the men, Boukie Mandal, and his brother, Hunooman, now grasped the long tiller, and while the others got out their poles and a couple of sweeps, we tried to make for the long low line of distant bank, which we could faintly see over the wide expanse of flooded country.

We had nothing to eat, in the boat, and in any case now, we were in for a very unpleasant time of it.

The men struggled and strained, and tried with might and main to put what distance they could between the heaving raging line of tumultuous billows, which marked the fierce strength of the mid stream, and which looked at from our boat suggested to me the figure of the back of some great yellow serpent.

Here and there the roof of a thatched hut and other *débris* which had been swept down by the tremendous current could be seen.

The whole effect was magnificent and awe-inspiring.

A long way ahead we could see the waving tops of a wide low line of partly submerged jungle grass, swaying as the

water rushed through it, and to this point the men were making the most desperate efforts to propel the boat.

If we could once get within poling reach of ground, we could manage to pole ourselves across the long ridge of flooded plain, and get out at one of the villages of the high land beyond, from whence we could make our way back to the factory.

And now befell an adventure which I consider one of the most extraordinary which, in the long course of a not uneventful career in India, ever occurred to me; but which, as it happened, resulted most happily for all concerned.

The persistent efforts of our crew had been so far successful that we were now well out of the main stream, and drifting at a slower rate although still rapidly, down on the bank of drift-wood, and waving grass which I have just referred to. As we got nearer, I was able to recognize the spot as the site of a favourite *batan*, which was usually resorted to in the cold weather by a family of *gwallas* from northern Tirhoot.

There were seven brothers—well-to-do men, having a pretty large patrimony near Singhessur—and for many years they had been in the habit of taking out a grazing lease in my *dehat* on the subsidence of the annual rains.

This was a favourite camp of theirs, it being the highest land in the *dyara* for many miles around, and in the cold weather it was surrounded on all sides by dense growths of jungle grass; and amid their shady recesses, large numbers of cattle and buffaloes belonging to the seven brothers were wont to graze. Of course where the cattle came there also were sure to be tigers, and I had often got valuable information from these men, and had not unfrequently visited their camp and received their valuable assistance in some of our hunting expeditions.

To any one who reads between the lines, and looks for a little more than a mere record of sport in these pages, they cannot but be struck with the numerous analogies which

my journals record, between old patriarchal life in scriptural times and that which is still the rule in these remote Eastern localities.

Here we have a perfect counterpart of a scriptural scene—a picture of the sons of the household leaving the old father and the younger children at home, while they take the flocks and herds to some distant locality for change of pasture.

I have myself seen, many a time and oft, some such stripling carrying news from the old ancestral homestead, to the brethren in the far-off pastures, as Joseph must have been, or as David, when he visited his brethren at the time when the giant Philistine was defying the armies of Israel.

The ordinary routine of everyday life is not much changed in the East since those old times, and a host of these associations are stirred up, and historic biblical incidents are illustrated, by what one sees every day in his usual experiences in these remote frontier tracks.

But a truce to these reflections. You doubtless want to hear my adventure.

Our boat was now steadily bearing down on the great heaving, swaying mass of flood-*débris*, which had been caught upon the fringe of these small islands; and knowing from past experience what we might expect, everyone of our party was on the look-out to see that we might not be boarded by snakes or wild animals, which were certain here to have taken refuge in greater or fewer numbers, owing to the suddenness and severity of the flood.

I have landed dozens of times, myself, on these isolated elevations in the midst of the surging waters during a great flood such as I am describing, and the seething mass of fugitive life would afford a rich ground for the investigations of a naturalist.

Here are collected representatives of all the denizens of the great valley, through which ordinarily the attenuated current of the river runs, but which in time of flood sweeps every-

thing before it; and so creeping crawling insects, reptiles, and beasts of all descriptions, get cast up on some such refuge as this, and there, under the pressure of a common fear, their natural antipathies and predatory instincts are held in check; and you may see the snake and the hare, and even the tiger and the lamb cower together; each seemingly oblivious of the other's presence.

On every stem of every reed that surmounts the tide, great clusters of ants, and winged and creeping insects of all kinds, swarm thickly together.

In amongst the brush and drift-wood you may find snakes innumerable, and so thick is the swarm of life, that you might stock a museum from the different *genera* found on one of these small prominences during flood time.

It was not however to my feelings as a naturalist or as a sportsman that an appeal was about to be made.

As we got closer to the floating, swaying bank of drifted wreck, one of the men in the bow called out something in a very excited tone to one or two of the others, and immediately all hands rushed forward, and my curiosity being roused I followed them.

Right in front of us, on the very extreme point, poised on the mass of jammed up drift and dead wood—rocking to and fro with every surge of the flood water; swaying and bending, now on this side and now on that, as the current preponderated this way or that way; seemingly hesitating and halting, as if it were a sentient thing, not knowing which channel to make for; now and then being momentarily submerged 'neath the yellow foam—was a fragile ragged piece of frail roof, from some village hut, which had been swept down stream by the sudden rising of the river;—and right in the ternce of this, swathed in voluminous folds of cotton cloth, lay a chubby little infant, with its fat little arms stretched out to us in mute supplication, and its great black eyes looking at us with a wistful appealing look; and the poor little thing,

like a second Moses in his ark of bulrushes, seemed to have been abandoned by God and man; and but for our timely and providential arrival, must undoubtedly have proved a prey to the raging elements around.

No other sign of living human being was apparent.

Already the *Chupper* or roof on which the babe lay had been invaded by several snakes, desperately struggling to extricate themselves from the mass of brush-wood and half-submerged flotsam in which they had become entangled.

Two mangy-looking jackals crouched and cowered and trembled in one corner of the triangular patch of ground, which stood above the level of the flood, the earth being blackened and charred with the marks of numerous fires; and in the far off corner, crouching on his belly, amid floating leaves and twigs, and the bending stems of the insect-laden reeds, crouched a lank, mangy, hungry-looking tiger, evidently in deadly fear, with his lips pale and retracted, showing the very gums to be of a deathly pallid colour, and the yellow fangs, worn almost to a stump.

And there he crouched, with his baleful, cruel eyes glowering at us, abject fear struggling in his expression, with the native ferocity and hatred of human kind, which was only held in check by the desperateness of his position.

Such was the picture.

The reader can perhaps realize the whole scene from my description.

It is certainly not an uncommon occurrence for children to be thus swept away by floods in some such manner, but here are, surely, all the elements of a first class sensational romance.

And yet such events are happening every day in the remote wilds of an Indian frontier. I need not weary the reader by piling incident upon incident. I shot the tiger. The skin was mangy and worthless.

The two poor devils of jackals at the sound of my rifle took to the water with a most melancholy howl, and were

presumably drowned. We rescued the baby—the poor little thing chuckling and crowing, and little conscious of the terrible death from which we had rescued it—and I might give you another chapter, detailing all the efforts that we made to discover its paternity, but ever without avail. I never knew from what village it had been taken.

I know not whether some poor mother may not have for weary years consumed her soul in sadness thinking of the loss of the bonnie bairn which the angry goddess *Koosee Mai* had selected as a victim.

Possibly the infant may have been the sole survivor of some little jungle nook, every soul of which may have been swept away by the sudden rising of the angry waters.

At all events, the child found a loving guardian in the person of my old *Keranie* and his half-caste wife.

And to make a long story short, we got safely to shore, got back to the factory all right, and I could not help thinking that there was some sort of poetic justice in our having rescued from the hungry embrace of *Koosee Mai* one young life in return for the strong Ragoober whose blood had dyed the stream in the morning, and to recover whose body had led us into such a perilous adventure.

Kunchun, during our absence, had managed to steal away. He was never brought to justice as far as I know. He compounded with Ragoober's relatives. Possibly married the widow for all I know to the contrary. At all events the murder—for such it undoubtedly was—blew over, and I heard no more about it.

CHAPTER XVI.

A JUNGLE TRAGEDY.

Varieties of winged game—News of a "big beat"—Get to camp—The marshes country—"Hunter's pot"—Charge of a wounded bull buffalo—A terrible impalement—On the track—Difficult country—Slow and dangerous tracking—Indications of our quarry—An unsuccessful day—A bad night—News with the dawn—Resume our quest—Horrible signs—Sickening gusts—A ghastly sight—Close of the tragedy—The funeral pyre.

In the middle of December, 1874, I was down at Burgammah superintending the packing of my indigo cakes, having already finished my own packing at the head factory; and as, unfortunately, the season had not been a very profitable one, and my assistant, Tom Hill, was on the spot, although suffering from fever and ague, poor fellow, my work was certainly not very onerous. I had, as may easily be imagined, plenty of spare time on my hands. There was splendid shooting in the neighbourhood, and I was not slow to take advantage of it. Some mornings I would go for a spin with my bobbery pack over the hard turfy uplands to the south of the factory, and kill a jackal or two, or possibly have a good course after a hare; and as my *syce* or other attendants would generally be waiting at some predetermined spot with my gun, I would there dismount and shoot back to Burgammah, calling at various little *jheels, i.e.* small lagoons, on my way; or beating up sundry patches of thatching grass intervening; and could always be certain of making a heavy, though certainly a motley, bag.

Hares were numerous, quail were abundant, wild duck, mallard, widgeon, teal, red-heads, blue fowl, painted snipe, jack snipe, and ordinary snipe, to say nothing of wading birds of various kinds, and other varieties such as the golden plover, the tiny ortolan, ground pigeon—green pigeon occasionally—and the beautiful florican, with its graceful plumes, might any day be met with in a single beat.

And down by the river the varieties of small game were equally abundant.

I especially remember one day, having made some good shooting, coming into the factory with some half-dozen coolies laden with game of all kinds.

It happened to be one of Hill's good days, and he had met me in high spirits near the cake house, waving what seemed to be a letter excitedly over his head.

I found it to be a summons from my friend Joe to come down at once, as he was getting up a big *hank—i.e.* a drive—after big game, and stating that tiger and buffalo were both plentiful, and asking me to get as many elephants as I could, and to send down one of my tents and some stores. As our packing was just finished, we determined to enjoy a week's outing; and accordingly the next day, having in the meantime made every arrangement to carry out Joe's wishes, we dropped down the river in one of the factory boats, and arrived at night-fall in the vicinity of the camp.

We slept on board that night, to give time for our elephants and camp equipage to get down and to be in readiness, and next day rode for some three or four miles to where Joe had pitched his camp, south of Dumdaha village, and in the vicinity of a long chain of lagoons and marshes, which had been in former years a famous hunting-ground, and had been notable as a favourite haunt for the now very rare rhinoceros.

Between the marshes were high ridges of dense jungle grass and matted bamboo thickets. Wild boar and hog-deer

were very plentiful, and it was always a certain haunt for tigers.

Down by the margin of the marshes, great herds of wild buffalo might generally be found, feeding on the succulent herbage and wallowing in the oozy slime round the edge of the lagoons. While on the broad reaches of shallow water, countless flocks of aquatic birds found favourite feeding quarters.

The great drawbacks were the still more teeming swarms of mosquitos, which in the hot weather really held undisputed sway, and absolutely forbade hunting of any kind in this otherwise favourite spot. But when the cold weather came, these buzzing pests were not, of course, so aggressive, and I had long looked forward to a hunt under Joe's captaincy in this famous locality.

On our arrival we found some indication of what we might expect in the way of sport, by seeing three fine tiger skins pegged out in front of Joe's hut, and half-a-dozen magnificent heads of great swamp buffaloes with splendid horns, the trophies of the preceding two or three days' shooting. We were soon deeply absorbed in the study of the mysteries of a "hunter's pot."

The hunter's pot was a thick luscious *olla podrida* of tongues and cuttings of various kinds of deer, the tit-bits from the breasts of florican, wild duck, snipe, etc., plovers' eggs galore, and a rich jelly cementing the mass, in which was embedded the contents of a couple of tins of champignons and a like proportion of truffles, two or three olives and some fine herbs; and a spoonful or two of this, eaten cold, with a *mayonnaise* dressing, for which I was renowned, and accompanied with crisp hot toast, generally formed our hunting breakfast.

Indeed we did not turn up our noses at it both for the mid-day and evening meal; and when washed down with copious draughts of artificially cooled beer or champagne

cup, we considered it quite good enough for us poor hungry hunters in these far-off jungle solitudes.

"Yes! you had better believe it!!" They used to know how to take care of the inner man in the Purneah jungles.

Now a dreadful thing had just happened. We were soon put in possession of the particulars.

One of Joe's trusted beaters had met with an appalling death, the record of which may sound like a romance, may even excite the derision of the flippant sceptic, but which happened in all its tragic ghastliness just as I shall describe it, if you permit me.

The facts were these.

Two days before, Joe had been "out" with his party, and they beat along the edge of one of these lagoons I have spoken of.

They had put up a large herd of buffaloes, amongst whom were two or three very fine bulls.

One fierce, solitary brute had charged down on the line, and although Joe had undoubtedly wounded him, yet, not having his Express rifle, he had not succeeded in inflicting any serious wound, but had only infuriated and maddened the already sufficiently fierce and ill-tempered brute. Tearing through the thick jungle, up the side of one of the hog-back ridges, the infuriated beast had charged right into a knot of coolies and beaters, who had there retired to a little cleared space while the shooting had been going on below. Making straight for these poor frightened fellows, with his strong, cruel horns lowered to the charge, the buffalo impaled one of Joe's men; and so determined was his charge and so terrible the force of his thrust, that one of the sharp-pointed horns had crushed clear through the coolie's body, right between the collar-bone and the shoulder-blade of the unfortunate victim, while the other horn pierced sheer through the bones of the pelvis, and pinned the hapless wretch to the earth.

So fierce was the thrust that the wounded brute was not

able to shake his ghastly burden off, and before the horror-stricken companions of the poor man could do anything to help him, and long before the elephants could come up, the buffalo had run into the fastnesses of the jungle beyond, bearing the shrieking man impaled alive upon the cruel horns. The party quickly formed into line and followed up as speedily as they could.

It was an awful fate, and each felt—European and native alike—chilled with horror as they thought over the sickening details of the ghastly tragedy. There was little doubt that the poor creature could not long have survived the first agony of his terrible position.

Evidences were not wanting at almost every step, in the blood-marked, trampled bushes and stained earth, that the maddened beast had vainly striven to rid himself of the burden of poor bleeding, bruised humanity that had thus found such an awful resting-place.

Time after time they came upon trampled grass and bushes where the experienced eye of the trackers could see that the beast had endeavoured to brush the dead body of the hapless hunter from off his horns.

But the first deadly thrust had been so terribly fierce, that it was evident the bull could not so easily dispose of his novel burden.

They followed the trail all that day, and the next day also they took it up.

The tracks led them into most dangerous and little frequented ground.

Two or three elephants had become almost hopelessly bogged, and on the morning of our arrival—the third day since the terrible catastrophe—they had not succeeded in getting either the buffalo or the mangled carcase of the poor fellow whose fate they were all eager to avenge. Being put in possession of these facts, we determined to make one final effort to track the buffalo, so striking camp, we sent the tents

forward some eight or ten miles, and then forming in line with our thirteen elephants, the number we had been able to procure, we set out on what was one of the most horrible quests in which I had ever been a participator.

All that day we floundered through the most terrible quagmires and frightful country.

We put up numberless herds of buffalo, but in none of them could we see that ONE weighted with his dread burden for which we were searching.

The sun vaulted high in the heavens, reached his zenith and declined, until at length he sank, a great red fiery globe, beneath the copper-coloured sky in the west.

Every now and then during the day we had been stimulated to an increased vigour in our search by frequent indications of the nearness of the wounded buffalo.

But tracking in such dangerous country was very difficult work for elephants. The great, tall water reeds grew in dense masses so thick that even one's adjacent elephant in the line, although but a few paces distant, was frequently quite undiscernible; and in amongst the great peaty masses of gigantic tussocks, amid which the black oozy mud quivered for yards all around at every step, and from whose slimy depths rose great green bubbles of deadly gas, our progress was necessarily very slow. At nightfall, therefore, we were perforce obliged to retire to the tents, and seek the welcome refreshment of our camp dinner, and weary and agitated, with the gloom of this fatal event depressing our spirits, we sought our couches and were soon asleep.

The horrible details had taken such possession of my imagination that my dreams were full of frightful suggestions, and I re-enacted all the shocking tragedy over again in my sleep. I could not help thinking too of the poor creature's humble home, so suddenly plunged into mourning. Too commonly in India, where life is often held so cheap, where there are such teeming multitudes of little-considered

humble fellow-mortals around us, whom we are accustomed to regard as just so many pawns in the game of fortune we play, the keener susceptibilities get blunted, and we are apt to forget that each dusky body envelops a soul, with emotions, affections, aspirations, and relationships quite as keen and binding as our own. We enter too little in our sympathies with the tender and touching human ties which are as strong and passionate in the poor jungle beater as perhaps they are with the lordly Sahib who orders him about with such regal disdain.

I spent a bad night. The thought of the poor fellow's bereaved wife and helpless orphans would intrude itself on my imagination, and I was glad when the grey chill streaks of dawn began to struggle with the dank mists around the tents.

Early next morning we were roused to a fresh prosecution of our search by news brought in by one of the trackers, that he had run the buffalo to earth at last, or rather to water, for, as the sequel proved, the distracted brute, still bearing its ghastly burden, had retreated to a dense bamboo jungle in the midst of a wide stretch of shallow lagoon, much like what we had searched the day previous, only more open, but with here and there a ridge of bamboo crowned island, almost inaccessible to elephants, and on that account very seldom disturbed.

After a hasty breakfast, away we hied. Our guide led us by devious, difficult paths through some most terrible country, till at length he pointed out to us horrible evidences that we were on the right track, by showing here and there portions of tattered rags stained with horrible human juices, and with bits of putrid rotting human flesh still adhering in fragments to them.

We had now to proceed warily. The footing was treacherous. The broad shallows of the gleaming lagoon stretched before us. In the middle rose the long hog-backed ridge of

the bamboo thicket. In the centre of the island we were told was a clear space, the site of a long dismantled shrine; and here it was the buffalo had taken sanctuary. Slowly we splashed and floundered through the slimy shallows. Again the black surging ooze emitted its poisonous gases, and as we neared the island, the stench became almost overpowering.

The wind was toward us, and sickening gusts came wafted to us; and presently we could dimly discern through a slight break in the boscage ahead an indistinct mass moving slowly to and fro in seemingly ceaseless incertitude; and as we still pressed on, and the elephants now cautiously bent aside the intervening stems, we saw a sight which for downright ghastliness and sickening horror I never have seen equalled.

In the centre of the raised clearing, gaunt, grisly, and with hollow heaving flanks, stood the buffalo, his tottering legs bending 'neath the weight of his emaciated shrunken frame, his massive neck swaying feebly from side to side beneath the weight of his great bony skull, and on the wide impaling horns THAT GHASTLY BURDEN!

An awful burden that! A gruesome spectacle! The poor rotting carcase still fixed on the terrible horns. The festering juices from the decomposed body had streamed down glistening and ghastly over the shaggy front and into the eyes and nostrils of the wretched wild beast. A baleful, buzzing swarm of flies and hornets circled round in a dark moving mass, settling thick as blight on the sweltering remains of what the sun had scorched and blistered, and the night mists had sodden, and the cruel bushes and thorns had lacerated and torn, and which, in the mad, furious efforts to disengage itself of his ghastly burden, the buffalo had dashed against every obstacle in his path, till it was battered and beaten out of all semblance to humanity, but which only four days agone had been a lusty, sinewy, agile hunter, with

bounding pulse and vigorous limbs. But now! Horrible! Horrible!!

The buffalo presented indeed a pitiful spectacle. For at least two or three days it must have been nearly blind. It was now wholly so. It could not have eaten for some days. Its great bones stared out from the shrunken, wrinkled hide. The poor beater, even in death, had taken a living and a terrible revenge.

The stench was so overpowering and the spectacle so appalling, that, hardened as we were, and accustomed to weird sights in these wild jungles, we did not care long to stay.

The blinded brute wearily lifted his burdened head, and turned his trembling front towards us, as his deadened senses caught the tokens of our approach.

Ah God! what a horrible sight was that! The maggots moving in the festering mass of dropping flesh—the sightless sockets of the living brute swarming with the hateful, odious crawling things, eating into the yet living tissues, and mingling dead and living in one horrible medley of seething corruption! The charnel smell—the sickening horror of the whole scene was indescribable.

"Put the poor brute out of this awful misery," said I to Joe.

Joe raised his rifle—glanced along the polished barrel.

A bang—a puff—a lumbering lurch—a staggering forward roll, and all was over!

Angrily buzzed the swarm of carrion flies. A few faint specks hovering far aloft in the pure empyrean betokened that the vultures were gathering for the feast.

At least we could avert that one last crowning horror. We could baulk the jackals, too, of their anticipated snarling orgie over the remains of the hapless hunter, and save the poor frail tenement of clay that one last crowning indignity. And so, though only a poor coolie, we remembered that, after

all, he had been a brother sportsman, and giving hasty orders, we soon had a great pile of withered grass and bamboos heaped high over both the wretched buffalo and his unhappy victim, and then the pyre was lit. We watched while the fierce flames roared and raged over the senseless remains, and licked the bones and greedily devoured the flesh, and so, in a wild holocaust of furious fire, the hollow bamboo stems crackling and exploding with a sound like guns, as if a funeral volley were being fired over the hapless hunter's remains, we consumed all traces of this sad and awful tragedy of the Koosee jungles.

CHAPTER XVII.

"A DAY AT THE DUCKS."

Fresh sensations at every footstep—The endless procession to the water—Daybreak—The annual exodus begins—The Kutmullea *Pokra*—The first shot—What a commotion!—Tank shooting—A good bag for the pot—The river banks—River scenery—What variety of life!—Shoot an alligator—A miss—Entangled in a *Rahur Khet*—Hornets—A sudden and unwelcome *rencontre*—A lucky escape—In the Oude jungles—Abundance of big game—A quiet saunter through the forest—The coolies give news of *nil ghai*—Muster the coolies for a beat—Take up a good position—Jungle sights and sounds—Sound of the distant beaters—My first *nil ghai*—Sudden appearance of a bull rhino—A glorious prize indeed!—Measurement.

DUCKS like water!

I suppose no one will deny that self-evident proposition, and if you desire ducks, you will naturally look for water.

Now duck shooting, although not so exciting a sport as the pursuit of big game, is, for an off day's pastime, one of the most delightful exercises in which Indian sportsmen can indulge; and then the plenitude of the air and water is such, and the potentialities of a day on the river are such, that at every fresh footstep you may experience a new sensation, and in fact you never know from moment to moment what may happen.

For instance, in taking a short cut through the grass or growing crops, to circumvent a bend in the river, you may haply chance upon a solitary stag, a morose bachelor boar, or possibly a wary leopard, lying up during the heat of the day, and waiting till the "shades of night" enswathe the village

in their garments of mystery, when with stealthy foot and red tongue licking his cruel chops, he will prowl around the precincts of the hamlet, to see if haply he may not pounce upon a belated dog, some luckless calf, or, if the circumstances be favourable, perhaps carry off a "kid of the goats," sheep of the fold, or possibly some luckless truant boy or girl or helpless babe—for he is not particular, and is quite willing to make a meal off any chance plump morsel that fortune may throw in his way.

Then, of course, there are such small deer as otter, porcupines, jackals, wolves, foxes, tiger-cats, florican, quail, plover, green-pigeon—in fact, a bewildering variety of winged creatures and four-footed beasts, from the great, heavy, lumbering *nil ghai*, down to the swift flights of tiny ortolans, flashing like diamond dust in the sunlight.

Beautiful as these little creatures certainly are, they are none the less savoury on that account, on toast, when nicely fried.

Possibly you do not know how to "do" ortolans? It would be no use to pluck them, they are too tiny. So you simply put two or three handfuls in a dipper, plunge them in scalding hot water, which brings off all the feathers, and in fact parboils them, and then you fry them in boiling butter or fat, serve on toast with a little red pepper and a dredging of bread-crumbs nicely browned, and you may just believe it, that in these same tiny little ortolans you have one of the most savoury dishes that not even the luxurious fancy of Apicius himself could have improved upon. In the thick jelly of "Hunter's Pot" they are most toothsome, or in an aspic they are simply delicious. At one time or another during the day or night, almost every kind of indigenous game may be found near the river or tank or lake as the case may be. In the early morning the water is alive with a bobbing mass of duck, mallard, widgeon, teal, and other kinds of web-footed swimming creatures, pruning their feathers, flapping their

wings, scolding, wooing, conversing in their extraordinary quack-lingo, waking the echoes on every side, and making a scene of such unlimited noise and motion as can only be witnessed to perfection in these great haunts of water-fowl life that abound in the *chowrs* and rivers of India.

Thus all day long the wading birds, numberless in their variety, run up and down the sand banks, parade in lines through the oozy marshes and humid hollows—stirring up with their busy beaks the retiring denizens of the ooze and slime upon which they prey; and 'neath the shade of the high banks, beasts of prey retire for their midday siesta; the stately elephant and truculent rhinoceros come down to slake their thirst when the broad afternoon shades are widening; and when the shadows of night begin to fall, singly and in twos and threes come the fierce beasts of prey; and then in troops the stately deer and graceful antelope advance, and the long lines of thirsty kine and ponderous buffalo deploy; while during all the livelong night the melancholy cry of the curlew or the monotonous dialogue of the Brahminee duck, give endless evidence that the teeming life of the Indian water-side is still awake and ever represented.

Let me try to give the reader an idea of a day amongst the ducks and water-fowl.

It is still grey dawn.

The long, slender, whip-like shafts of the swaying bamboos gently rustle 'neath the first faint breath of awakening morn, or, shivering through the dank mists that are now rallying their reserves of grey battalions, as if to present a last front of desperate but hopeless battle to the onslaught of yonder quivering shafts of light, that begin to shoot forth tremulously yet strong from the "chambers of the East," where the mighty sun is shaking his tawny locks and rousing himself "like a strong man to run his race." You have long been up, for in India we retire early, and are up before the dawn.

A few *minahs* are giving forth a husky modest twitter in the bamboo grove beside the river. The blue smoke curls lazily up from the heaped fire of withered leaves and dry cow-dung, around which are confusedly grouped the prone figures of your night-watchmen and a few of your domestic servants of the lower caste, who, having wrapped themselves in their cotton garments like so many patients in a hydropathic establishment, have there been tasting "Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," during the "silent watches of the night," placidly resting on the great calm bosom of "Mother Earth."

As you emerge from your tented chamber and sound the dog whistle, the bobbery pack yelp out a motley chorus of delighted greetings in response to your cheery salutation.

The horses rattle their picket chains and neigh responsively; the recumbent figures round the fire unwind themselves like so many mummies getting rid of their cerements, assume a sitting attitude, lazily stretch themselves; and as the great red disc of the morning sun peeps above the horizon, and sends his shafts and arrows piercing through the rolling columns of the mist, the full life of your establishment awakens once again to the tasks and duties of the day.

And presently the *Khansamah*, with his graceful gait and flowing white robes, emerges from some nook in rear of the camp with your *chota hazree*, which consists of some simple dish and cup of fragrant tea, and you partake of your modest morning meal, feeling a grateful sense of coolness and refreshment.

For the few morning hours are always the most delicious of the day in your Indian home.

But hark!

Whish!

Whis-s-sh. Whi-sh-sh-sh!!!

A sound as of "a mighty rushing wind" passes over your head!

Instinctively you look aloft.

There is a tremulous flash through the sky, and then the mighty winged squadron of the annual flight of migratory water-fowl fills the air with sound and motion; and remembering with a sigh that the hot weather is approaching, you determine to have "a day at the ducks." Have you ever seen this annual migration from the Indian *chowrs*?

It is a wonderful sight.

On they come in ceaseless, rapid, unfaltering flight, with that swift, rushing sound that is so hard to describe, but which gets familiar to every Indian sportsman.

Sometimes it is a long single line of birds in the shape of the letter V clearly limned against the morning sky.

With outstretched neck and eager wing they hurry on, cleaving the air with steady unwavering flight, moved by some mysterious impulse to wend their way northwards, to the Siberian steppes or Thibetan marshes, until the torrid heat of the Indian summer shall again have passed, and they shall once more revisit the broad welcome rice *chowrs*, to feast upon the dainties that their fat margins afford. These first V-shaped battalions are the grey geese and heavy-winged mallards.

And now far in the distance, like mere specks in the infinity of space, another line is seen, wavering, rising, falling, aye advancing—now a long-drawn, thin echelon, anon a dark, compact, wedge-like mass.

In a few minutes they are over us—and now they are but flickering specks again. They swoop past with a rush like a charge of cavalry. Here again they rally to the onset.

On they come, without pause or check.

Sometimes in large bodies that almost make a current in the air, and again in smaller detachments, and sometimes only in twos or threes.

It is evidently the commencement of the great annual exodus.

My young assistant D—— is still abed.

"Ahoy!" I shout. "Are you going to sleep all day?"

A gurgle and a groan.

"Get up, man!"

A lazy roll.

"Come, come, get up! Here's *Chotah Hazree!*"

"Um—m—m, all right!" said very slowly and indistinctly. Something follows that might be taken for a muttered malediction.

Then there is a desperate digging of knuckles into the reluctant eye-lids, and at length D—— is wide awake; and we are soon fully equipped and ready for "a day at the ducks." We will first try *Kutmullea pokra!*

The *pokra* is about two miles from the factory, and the most picturesque spot I know in all the *dehat.*

No one knows when it was dug, and for the matter of that, I suppose, no one cares.

And yet it must have been a marvellous work, for it is in fact one of the largest tanks or artificial reservoirs of water I have seen even in this land where such huge works are so common.

It is perfectly four-square, and the embankments on all sides, formed in olden time by the up-throwing from the great excavations inside, are very high—indeed, exceptionally so.

As a rule, the embankments around these old tanks, from erosion and other natural causes, have gradually subsided into the plain, and often silted back into the old bed from which they were originally dug; and thousands of tanks in India, from sheer neglect and laziness, have gradually silted up, and become mere depressions of mud and water, lush with rushes and aquatic vegetation, the haunt of malarious fever; and the *habitat* of snipe and duck, and mallard and teal, and other wading and swimming birds in bewildering but welcome profusion from a sportsman's point of view.

Around the *Kutmullea pokra* several old temples are perched here and there on picturesque "coigns of vantage," each shaded by some magnificent tamarind trees, amid whose feathery foliage the white, slender shaft of the lime-washed minaret or dome gleams brightly; and the surface of the tank itself presents a dense mass of tangled weeds and water-lilies, which form a tempting covert to the myriads of water-fowl that are generally to be found here located. The battle between the morning sun and the dank night mists has not yet been altogether fought out here.

At present a canopy of fog, which one might fancy was the sulphurous smoke of an artillery engagement, has just settled down over the still surface of the *pokra*.

But this condition of affairs is rather favourable for our sport than otherwise.

It wants but three days to our annual race-meeting.

And, let not the reader start.

We are not bent so much on sport this morning as on murder.

The fact is, we are out on a pot-hunting expedition.

A sharp canter brings us to the tank.

Here we are met by one of my *zilladars*, from whom we receive the welcome intelligence that there are lots of birds.

The west side is rather bare, but the east and south banks being much overgrown with brushwood, afford excellent shelter for our stalking.

Sending D—— around to the east side, I give him time to get a good position, and then cautiously top the bank under cover of one of the giant tamarind trees, and I am delighted to find a dense flock of birds right at my feet.

They are quite unsuspicious, and are paddling about, feeding in quiet security, and I have ample time to select my victims.

Singling out three large *doomer*—beautiful fat plump

birds—I take a murderous aim, and—bang! bang! go the two barrels, and I can see seven or eight birds floundering hopelessly in the water.

Saw you ever such a commotion?

With a wild shriek or scream, or multitudinous quack, if you like it better, the whole flock rise *en masse*, and after one wild, plunging, hurrying, circling flight, just as I expected, away they go right over to the eastern side, where D—— has taken up his ambush.

Bang! bang!! I hear his breechloader speak, and several birds come tumbling to the earth.

Again the breechloader strikes the ready note, and again the feathers fly.

In hurried, circling, eddying flights, the bewildered ducks, now fairly nonplussed, make for my side, and again I get two successful shots.

This drives them higher, but still they hover over the *pokra*, and by-and-by they settle down well out of range in the middle of its broad expanse.

Alas for the pity of it! away go several crippled ones, slowly and painfully battling their way from the main body, while numbers of dead birds remain floating here and there at intervals.

While the birds have been circling out of range, we have retreated behind the outside cover of the embankments, and now D—— rejoins me.

A tall, lanky *chowkedar* from the village now puts in an appearance; and encasing his head in a great wide-mouthed *gumla*, or earthen pot, with perforations in it for eye-holes, he enters the water, retrieves the dead birds, and as many of the wounded ones as he can get at, and then rejoins us.

There is no boat, nor raft, nor even a dug-out on the tank, and so I propose to D—— that he should go back to his former place while I go down to the edge of the water and try a long shot.

My idea being that, whether successful or not, this would at least "rise" the birds, and probably send them near us again.

To this he agreed; and when he had got to his place I proceeded to fulfil my part of the programme. Having been at this game before, I walked down quite openly to the edge of the water.

But the ducks are now thoroughly scared and shy, and scuttle across the water as I come on. At such a distance there is no use of my trying a shot; but the nearer I get to the margin of the water, they gradually edge nearer and nearer to the east side, where D—— lies *perdu*, and so at last—bang! bang! goes again his iron tube, and several more birds are added to the list of killed and wounded.

This was too much for them.

Away they fly round and round, high over our heads, with the exception of a couple of foolhardy teal, that come incautiously near me, so I drop one and wound the other, which struggled on a little further, and then fell into a stubble-field, where my *syce* picked it up.

The main flock were by this time completely out of range, but this last shot of mine raised a fine large grey duck, which from some reason or other had stayed behind, and away he now flew with a scared quack! quack! right athwart D——'s ambush.

A puff of white smoke above the bushes, a sharp report, and the strong, swift flight of the bird is arrested as if by magic, and amid the "*wah wahs*" and "*bapre baps*" of a lot of gaping *assamees* that the sound of our shooting has attracted to the spot, the fine fat duck comes down with a dull crash among the undergrowth.

I certainly never saw a finer shot, for it must have been over sixty yards' range, and this was before the days of choke bores.

We now sent the lanky *chowkedar* to D—— again, and

ordered the village *doosad* to collect the spoil; then having watched the ducks go off eastwards, and knowing that there was another little tank about a mile further on, I proposed to give that a visit, as I had a strong belief that our game would halt there.

Nor were we disappointed.

Leaving the *doosad* to try as best he might to retrieve the cripples, we jogged along to *Chota Bhelwyah*, the name of the other *pokra*.

This is a mere pond as compared with the big tank we had just been shooting over, and is completely surrounded with a thick belt of trees and undergrowth.

There is just a little pool of water in the centre, the rest of the tank being almost choked with silt and weeds. I knew the spot well, as it was a favourite place for snipe, and I had made frequent visits to its weedy margin.

Dismounting behind the belt of trees on the bank, we had at once abundant oral evidence that the ducks were here. They were keeping up a fearful quacking clamour, no doubt discussing the rude interruption to their quiet existence which they had just experienced.

Cautiously creeping through the cover, we found the little pool in the centre simply a living mass of ducks. Losing no time, we fired together; and never was such execution done in such short time. D—— had time for two long flying shots as the flock circled overhead, and we could scarcely believe our luck as we watched them swiftly wend their way back to *Kutmullea* again.

"Hurrah!" cried I, "we'll have another chance at them yet."

From this little tank we added twelve couple to the bag, but we spent a long time searching for the wounded.

I put about twenty *assamees* into the rushes, and regularly beat the tank from end to end.

Telling D—— to look out for snipe, we each took one

side of the tank, and went slowly along with the line of beaters.

It was great fun, as every now and then a poor wounded duck would try to get away, when there would be a rush and struggle for the prize, amid much mutual vituperation on the part of the free-spoken agriculturists who were acting as our retrievers.

As they got over more than half the tank, the snipe began to rise, and some very pretty shooting followed on the part of D——.

I don't know what was the matter with me, but I missed over and over again, and only got three snipe to D——'s eleven.

Committing the slain to the care of a *tokedar*, we hurried back to the *Kutmullea* tank.

We made our approaches very gradually, as you may imagine, but our star of fortune shone still brightly, for we secured a place among the bushes just within range.

We both fired together, one barrel each, and running quickly down, got still another shot, dropping three more between us.

Once again, as the flock swept past us, our shooting irons spoke, adding still another quota to the bag.

We now called a halt, and on counting the birds, found the bag consisted of thirty-three and a half couple of duck, teal and mallard mixed, one goose, and seven couple of snipe.

While sitting waiting for the horses to be brought up, a poor solitary duck, lured into rash confidence by the stillness, emerged from some weeds close by, and was immediately spotted.

I had one barrel loaded, but D—— had withdrawn the cartridges from his gun.

The bird was a long way off, and was evidently a wounded one, and more for the sake of emptying my barrel than with

Pati[illegible] boats and [illegible]

any hope of hitting it, I took aim, giving lots of elevation to the old gun, and fired.

The result certainly exceeded my most sanguine expectations.

Of course the charge scattered fearfully, but one fatal pellet found out a vital spot. We saw the duck regularly leap out of the water, and then alight, dead as a herring. The pellet had gone clean through the eye into the brain.

It was now breakfast-time, so we rode back to the bungalow, cleaned our shooting-irons, and after breakfast I proposed that we should try the river.

D—— was delighted, and to provide against all eventualities, as there was a chance of both deer and pig, I took my carbine with me as well as my gun, while D—— also took some ball cartridges with him.

The river named the *Chota Gunduck* is quite close to the bungalow, and we soon arrived at its banks.

The river has cut its way through the rich alluvial mould of the fertile plain, and at this season of the year rolls its pellucid waters in a contracted channel some fifty or sixty feet beneath the surface of the adjacent country, the banks for the most part are ragged and over-hanging.

So keen is the struggle for life, and so dense is the population in the numerous villages, that even where the banks have toppled over and lie in tumbled, ridgy masses beside the verge of the river, the industrious cultivators, wherever there is a foothold, have planted vetches or other crops, and utilised even that tiny patch. And thus the river runs in a deep canal-like cutting as it were, clothed with luxuriant verdure from top to bottom of the cliffy banks; and it is only on the long sand-bars, where the river takes some sudden turn, that duck may be expected to be found. Quail, however, are abundant everywhere.

In fact you may go right across the plain, wher you

would never imagine that a deep river was close to you, until all of a sudden your horse pulls you up right on the giddy verge of the over-hanging banks. The country around is one vast rolling sheet of green. The rich flat expanse is thickly clad with the young luxuriant cold weather crops.

Scarcely a tree is to be seen.

The only relief to the uniformity is an occasional collection of wretched huts—the odorous habitation of a considerable colony of *mullahs* or fishermen. Their ragged brown nets are festooned on sundry pliant bamboo poles, and a circling flight of scavenger kites constantly hover overhead.

The villages of the cultivators who own these great tracts of rich green lands are far away back from the river's edge, on the higher lands; for be it remembered, that when the rainy season comes on, all this magnificent basin, waving with green though it be now, will be a vast rice swamp then, with the river water rolling sluggishly along, and boats will be plying over the very spot where we now stand. Be it understood this chapter is not for the sportsman. I am trying to describe the country.

Well, we started at Bailah village, and walked our horses slowly down to the river.

The first thing "shootable" we saw was a pair of Brahminee ducks.

They were resting on a sand spit in the middle of the river, but on seeing us they got up with their slow, heavy flight, and uttering their melancholy monotonous cry, were soon out of danger's way. (They are not considered fairly to come under the category of game.)

A middle-sized alligator, with his serrated back and ugly long snout, on the end of which is a protuberance of a sponge-like character, perhaps divining that we were on rather a cockney sort of pot-hunting expedition, seemed to apprehend some danger, and slowly slid off the ooze into the greenish depths of the river.

Now apart from the attractions of the spot, I always like a ride along the river on such a day as this; the air is balmy and still, the heat is tempered by plenteous clouds, and the temperature is much akin to that of a lovely autumn day in England.

The silent swallows skim backwards and forwards in swift evolutions.

Here and there, at some infrequent bare spot in the loamy cliffs, a colony of sand martins have taken up their abode, and a chattering flock of *minahs*—the Indian starling—hop about in your immediate vicinity.

The ever-watchful kingfisher hovers above a whirling eddy, now plunges down as rapid as lightning, anon skimming the surface like a glancing sunbeam, or perched on some projecting point, quietly ruminates on the trials and troubles of life, as he digests the last unfortunate member of the finny tribe which he has transferred to his capacious maw.

Then there are the gulls, ever flitting backwards and forwards like restless spirits over the bosom of the deep, occasionally swooping down till their pinions ruffle the surface of the sluggish stream, and often rising again in triumph over the capture of another hapless fish.

The snippets, sandpipers, plovers, blue-fowl, and countless other long-legged, long-beaked, big and little birds, are grouped about in every sandy shallow and on every muddy ridge.

A bloated porpoise shows his pointed snout for a moment, and then his ugly black back rolls heavily through the stream as the unwieldy-looking brute surges slowly ahead.

Here and there a turtle shows his little head above the water, enjoying the genial warmth of the mid-day sun, while another alligator, disturbed by our approach, slides noiselessly like some unclean thing through the slimy mud, and disappears amid the turbid depths.

We have just turned the bend of the river, and there is a broad, shelving sandbank before us. See! there is an alligator now on ahead.

Now warily and cautiously back yet further from the bank, and now we come quietly up till we are within thirty yards of him.

He hears us.

See, he raises his head!

Now, good bullet, do your duty.

Bravo! We had him then, right behind the shoulder.

Hurrah, we have fairly bagged an alligator!

Remember we were at this time veritable griffins, and used to blaze away at everything that came in the way.

Another shot into him as he flounders about, and now he is stone dead.

One of the *dangur* boys is carrying my spare gun, and I can see his eyes glisten with delight, for the *dangurs* will have a feast to-night, and will make very short work with the alligator, tough and nasty as he looks.

We have already seen several duck, but they are too wary, and we cannot get within range, so we go further down to a place which is generally good for a couple or two.

It is a muddy stretch at a bend of the river, with a high sandbank behind it, affording good cover for a stalk.

Sure enough the ducks are there, and I allow D—— to try the stalk.

He got fairly within range, and was just about to fire, when whir-r-r! away they went, and though he fired after them, the result was nil. I tried a long shot after them as they flew past me between the two banks, but they were too far off, and my attempt also resulted in a miss.

This was discouraging.

However, on we went, and on nearing *Ghoreah* village we got into a tangled wilderness of *rahur*, where I was literally

brushed off my horse by the strong branches, and D—— had a narrow escape from falling over the steep bank into the river.

To add to the *contretemps*, we floundered into a nest of hornets, who stung the horses and caused them to stampede, and we had to crouch down with our faces to the ground amidst the undergrowth, whilst the angry brutes buzzed away most viciously overhead.

This was certainly *not* funny, and we fully experienced the sensations and sympathised with the feelings the Serpent must have felt when he received the announcement in Eden that he would have to become a "crawler" for the rest of his life.

Our adventures were not, however, at an end yet.

Just as we were beginning to congratulate ourselves that we had escaped from our angry buzzing assailants, and were still in our undignified prostrate attitude, I heard an ominous *hoo hoo* right in front of me.

Casting my eyes in D——'s direction, I noticed a look of agonised horror overspread his usually rubicund countenance, and in a whisper, whose deep, hissing intensity showed me that my doughty little D—— was in a mortal funk, he said, "Great Cæsar, there's a *soor!*"

And a *soor* sure enough it was.

Fortunately not a tusker, but a gaunt, mud-encrusted, yellow-fanged old sow, with vicious twinkling, blood-shot eyes, lanky legs, and ragged ears, and an interesting litter of brindled little curly-tailed squealers, arching their backs and bristling up like so many tom-cats almost, all huddling around the old mother's hind legs, as with an alert front and an angry snort of defiance she made most portentously hostile demonstrations against the two unlucky "crawlers" who had thus rashly intruded upon her privacy.

Now this may read somewhat amusing, but I can assure you it is no laughing matter to be tackled even by an angry

old sow in a thick, matted tangle of *rahur* stalks. It might very easily be a matter of life and death.

Fortunately I was able to bring my carbine to shoulder, and before the brute could charge us, I planted a bullet fair in her chest and toppled her over.

But I can honestly say that in all my after experience with wild boar, leopard, tiger, buffalo, rhinoceros, and other big game, I never was in such a mortal funk as for the first two or three eventful seconds after hearing that ominous and startling *hoo hoo* in the *rahur* field. This settled our duck shooting for the day, and we were right glad to get back scatheless to the factory.

I remember another day of quite as varied incident on the *Kutna Nuddee*, when I had gone up many years after to *Oude* to take over charge of the forest grants, which I shall refer to presently at greater length.

On the *Kutna* one could encounter quite as great a variety of water-fowl as on either the *Baugmuttee* or the *Gunduck*.

But with this added excellence, that the primeval jungles stretched all around for leagues, and big game might be come upon at any moment.

For example, in one day, while out after pea-fowl ostensibly, I have come across half-a-dozen different kinds of deer, leopards, wild pig, wolves, wild buffaloes, and even a lordly tiger himself.

On the particular occasion to which I allude, I was sauntering slowly along the river bank, trying to shoot a *muggur*, which haunted a sluggish pool near where the coolies were clearing the jungle. This particular brute was reputed to be a man-eater, and while gingerly treading the narrow forest track, two or three of my men came up in a state of great excitement, to tell me that three *nil ghai* had gone into the forest a little distance ahead, and they earnestly entreated me to allow them to have a *hank*, as they were very desirous of having roast venison for their Sunday dinner.

This was on a Saturday afternoon.

Nothing loth, I sent them back to call all the coolies off their work, and making them take a wide *détour* so as to drive the game towards me, I posted myself on a small eminence jutting out into the stream, having a piece of boggy ground between me and the jungle in front, and of course being surrounded by the sinuosity of the water-course on all the other sides.

It was a capital position to take up, for it gave me command of all the slope trending towards the river, while at the same time any game being driven in my direction must of necessity pass across the marshy piece of ground to get to the river, and while floundering about in the bog, I could not fail to have ample opportunity of making a good shot.

I had not long to wait.

But in these sylvan haunts, one need never feel a trace of *ennui*, as there is little monotony in an Indian jungle.

In the river, sluggish and muddy as was its current, various kinds of water-fowl steal silently in and out among the sedges, while a lazy *raho* would ever and anon poke his ugly blunt snout above the surface and lazily absorb an unconscious fly.

Small turtle here and there might be seen basking on a half-submerged and rotting log.

A dainty little squirrel, with tail elevated over his prettily barred back, would run up and down frisking and playing with his mate; and darting through among the trees might be seen whole troops of gleaming noisy parrots and other gay plumaged birds, while if you could not see, you could still hear the muffled drum of some strutting pea-fowl as he swelled himself in all the pride of his glorious plumage, and made himself an object of wonder and admiration to his timorous harem of pea-hens in the leafy covert beyond the river.

There is never much sound in these jungles during the day.

But to the keen observer, who has been trained to scan the jungle with an eye that lets nothing escape it, every little knot of bushes, nay, every clump of grass gives evidence of life.

The deep, monotonous boom of the great croaking swamp frogs breaks in ever and anon upon the current of your reflections; the arrowy flight of the iridescent kingfisher, as she shoots from aloft and cleaves the water with her wedgy beak, and then emerges triumphant with a wriggling tiny fish in her bill, sometimes startles you.

A snake or two may stealthily slide across the half-worn track made by the deer through the grass as they come to the salt-lick near the margin of the water night after night.

A lizard or a great wriggling iguana, shooting out his quivering fork-like tongue, may catch your eye for a minute, as he warily puts a tree-bole between him and yourself, and peers around at you as if wondering what in the world has brought this curious-looking two-legged thing within the circuit of his vision.

High overhead, in the still tremulous atmosphere, you see the great silent sweep of the ever-watchful vultures, circling round and round in never ceasing flight.

A tiny *chikara*, or four-horned antelope, the most delicate looking of the deer tribe, peeps out gingerly for a moment from behind that *Jhamun* bush, and then catching sight of your glinting gun-barrel, he is off with a bound, like a grasshopper.

The ugly grey muzzle of a plethoric jackal is protruded for a moment behind yonder log, and then again withdrawn, and you feel conscious that all around, numerous eyes of bird and beast and reptile are peering at you through the leafy screen, and you know not but that some hungry beast is gloating greedily with looks of fear yet hate upon his natural

Now you hear the distant sound of the shouting beaters, and see! on the slope beyond, a hurrying, agitated, wavy motion in the dense undergrowth, the sharp crack of dry sticks being snapt by a heavy tread, and above the leafy bushes just for a moment you see the antlered outline of a noble stag as he plunges through the jungle.

He seeks the ford below, and after him in swift and stately procession troop the graceful hinds that constitute his following.

After a pause, you hear above the distant shouting another lumbering onward rush, and right through the bosky dell, scorning concealment, blundering blindly on to his fate, a heavy, awkward *nil ghai* comes floundering on, ploughing right through the marshy, treacherous ground in front, and as he tops the bank within twenty feet of you, he receives your bullet full in the chest; the warm gouts of spouting blood quickly follow the wound, and he topples over with a last desperate quivering kick.

And so falls your first *nil ghai.*

It was rather sorry work.

The poor brute, although belonging to the antelope family, has little of the elegance or grace of that *genera.*

The flesh is coarse and rank, and as the poor beast shows little fight and is not easily missed, there is very little excitement in the sport.

I was just about to saunter leisurely from my concealment to have a good look at the animal, for this was the first *nil ghai* I had ever shot, when a roar of augmented intensity from the beaters, with shrieks and hoarse cries of "Ghenra! Ghenra!" were heard, and the heavy crashing, as if of a ponderous body in front, apprised me that nobler and more dangerous game was afoot.

Well was it for me that I had chosen the position I had.

I had risen from my seat and was standing full in view,

having, of course, re-loaded, when right in front of me—not thirty yards away, but on the other side of the boggy ground I have referred to—forth from the jungle, in headlong, desperate flight, came a magnificent full-grown bull rhinoceros.

"Ugh! what an ugly exterior," I mentally exclaimed. "Here's a pickle if I happen to miss." My heart, I must confess, gave a desperate beat.

There was little time for reflection. It was evident the angry brute had seen me, and with a hoarse, choking grunt of wrath and defiance he came plunging straight for me, rushing right into the morass.

He plunged in up to the shoulders, and luckily for me there he floundered.

Now was my opportunity!

Hastily running down towards him, taking half-a-dozen paces to the right, to get him more broadside on, I let him have a bullet right behind the thick fold of his meshy skin that hung over his ponderous shoulders, and the deep sob, or grunt rather, of pain, found a triumphant echo in mine heart as it told me that the bullet had gone home.

I let drive again with the second barrel, taking him right behind the ear, and with a yell of triumph which I could not repress, I saw the mighty brute sway to and fro, heaving his ponderous body as one may see a giant of the forest swayed by a rushing wind, and then with a hoarse groan he lurched forward, struggled again through the tenacious clinging mud, and then crashed heavily over almost at my feet. What a glorious prize!

This was indeed a piece of luck.

Presently up came the eager, panting beaters, and you may imagine the scene that followed.

The horn was a very fine one, being nine and a half inches from the apex to the base in front.

The length of the body from snout to end of tail was eleven feet one inch.

The girth, eleven feet, five and one-half inches.

Girth of fore-arm, three feet one-half inch; and from toe to shoulder, the height was five feet nine and one-half inches.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE WILDS OF OUDE.

New surroundings—Waste land grants—A forest Alsatia—Pioneer work—The bungalow and its environment—My pets—An outpost near the Sarda River—Reducing chaos to order—Surveying the country—A likely spot for tiger—Send Juggroo for the elephant—A sudden interruption—A roar and a panic—The young tiger charges—A picture of savage grace—Lucky escape and fortunate shot—Another surprise—Advent of the elephant—Preparing to beat—*Motee* refuses—More elephants needed—Renew the beat next day—Forming line—A plucky charge—A stampede—The coolies refuse—Trying it single-handed—Once more to the charge—A hit!—The tigress turns tail—A foolish resolve—Following the tigress—"A dry and weary wilderness"—Cross the Sarda—Intense excitement—A stern chase—In a dangerous fix—Hopelessly lost—"No sign of life or water"—Deadly thirst—Delirium—I am deserted—A terrible night—Digging for water—Unconsciousness—Found by the searchers.

In a far-off corner of this historic province of "Tigerland" were my next experiences of Indian "Tent Life" destined to lie. The death of the rhino just described was one of my first experiences in my new environment. Let me describe it.

The chill swamp mists and sweltering steams of the Koosee jungles had nearly made an end of me, and were like to lay my bones to rest beside the three lonely mounds in the factory garden at Lutchmeepore; but happily yielding to the solicitations of a beloved brother—alas! since gone to his rest—I took a short run home after the famine year, and early in 1876, I found myself back again in India, and installed in charge of very extensive waste-land grants, in the

northern corner of Oude. Indeed, portions of my forest land and not a few of my villages extended right away up to the banks of the Sarda in the North-West Provinces.

The surroundings here were entirely different to anything to which I had hitherto been accustomed. The very habits and castes of the people were different; the dialect was strange to me at first. The crops were new to me. The system of agriculture was more primitive. The whole country, instead of being flat, sandy, and covered with the tall coarse Koosee grass, was clad thick with dense forest jungle, interspersed with broad plains; and these covered with short crisp herbage, on which vast herds of black buck browsed, and which were as entirely opposite to the swampy marshes of the Koosee *Dyaras* as they well could be.

The "grants" were held under certain conditions of improvement clearly laid down and defined in the Waste Land Regulations; and my improvements were liable to be measured up, or at all events inspected, once every five years. Owing to a succession of bad seasons and very indifferent management, the estates had been allowed to drift. Improvements were at a stand-still. Village settlement had been totally arrested. That is, settlement of the proper kind; but owing to incompetence and neglect, large portions of the forest had been encroached upon by indiscriminate and irresponsible selectors; and the grazing and forest rights had been so badly conserved that the grants had in reality become a sort of no man's territory—a kind of Alsatia, to which Adullamites resorted, and where, as in the time of the Judges in Israel, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

I had got the survey maps of the place and studied them well. I had also made a careful and patient survey for myself, and I found that, under proper management and with judicious outlay, the grants could be made a very payable property; and so I accepted the charge, and began

again my wild, lonely forest life, under new conditions, but with the most perfect confidence reposed in me, and with *carte blanche* at my disposal so far as funds were concerned.

The nearest city was Shajehanpore, some thirty miles distant on the one side to the south; while on the south-east lay the cleanly little town and military cantonment of Sitapore. Midway between Sitapore and Doddpore, which was the name of my headquarters, lay the village and police station of Mahumdee, a place famous in the annals of the great mutiny; but I cannot tell that story now.

My only European neighbour was a burly Angus-shire man, bearing a well-known and honoured Angus name; and he was so reserved and retiring that all sorts of rumours were afloat concerning him. But of him more anon.

The main topographical feature of the greater "grant" (the one on which most work and money had been expended) was a deep, sluggish, tortuous watercourse, which wound snakelike through the almost impervious forest jungle, and which, though choked up and impeded in almost every yard of its course by tons of *débris*, masses of fallen timber, and great unsightly accumulations of rotting vegetation, drift and rubbish generally, yet contained a goodly volume of water, which ran perennially with a sluggish, almost imperceptible flow, but which I felt convinced, if properly cleared and judiciously conserved, would give me a magnificent source of wealth in the facility which it afforded for irrigation on a large scale; and to this important work of clearing the *Kutna nuddee*—for so was it called—and preparing the rich virgin lands on its banks for indigo and other crops, were my first energies and endeavours directed.

I had, too, simultaneously with the more immediate rough work, such as this was, of forest reclamation and water conservation, to make an accurate survey of what the grants really comprised. I had to assert my rights where these had

dainty but dangerous delicacies every morning—I say dangerous, because I have to watch that none of the insidious termites are allowed to effect a lodgment in the walls or floor of the bungalow.

Then there is my daintily formed, delicate little antelope "Nita," dearest pet of all. She comes tripping up at my call, the silver collar of tiny bells round her neck making fairy music to the graceful undulations of her supple sylph-like form. And she often leaps up into my lap when I am lying reading, and disputes possession of couch with a great Persian long-haired, blue-eyed cat, and a couple of wiry-haired, pink-nosed, affectionate and playful mongoose.

In front extends a trimly kept garden, gay with flowers, redolent of sweet perfumes, and sloping gradually down to the circumference of the guarding hedge of thorny shrubs, beyond which lies a tangled expanse of thick thatching grass, in which lurk the slouching jackal, the sly fox, the lanky Indian hare, and any quantity of red-legged quail, grey partridge, and occasionally a stray florican, perhaps a belated pea-fowl, or sometimes the more deadly and dangerous wolf or leopard.

Beyond that again, stretching around in a continuous dark circle, without a break, hemming in the spacious plain with a mysterious belt of glossy foliage, stands the forest primeval; and in the glades and coverts, and around the rank tangle of undergrowth, there are to be found nearly every variety of game known to the Indian sportsman—from the fierce rhinoceros and savage tiger, down to the little four-horned *chikara*, the smallest antelope we have got.

The great plain, in which my group of buildings is the central object, has been carven or hewn out of the forest; and it is now well cultivated, and, indeed, the harvest is even now well begun. Various groups of *Assamees*, or cultivators, working in the fields, give an air of life to what is generally, I must confess, a rather lonely and solitary prospect. Two

or three semi-deserted villages are scattered at intervals over the plain, and tiny curling columns of whitish-grey smoke rise in clear relief against the black background of sombre *sal* jungle. A *pakur* tree (not unlike the aspen) raises at intervals its canopy of brighter green, or a *Parass* (the flame tree), gorgeous with its crimson blossom, breaks in like a splash of fire on the uniform dull tint of the surrounding woods. There are no tall palms, no feathery clumps of bamboos, no fringed streamers of the flag-like banana, no glistening dome of sacred shrine as yet in this infant settlement, to break the melancholy monotony of the far-stretching forest.

There *is* one gap to be sure. I had almost forgot. Right in front there is a jagged break in the continuity of the circumference of boscage, yawning like the mouth of a tomb. A thick black smoke ascends day and night from this cleft aperture, for here my gangs of coolies are busy clearing a wide track to the river—opening out fresh land for the plough—and here the brick-kiln burns, and great piles of charcoal are constantly being made.

Having had a sprinkling of rain during the night, the air is crisp, and the atmosphere is unusually clear, and far away in the extreme distance, over the long low line of forest country, the mighty crests of the majestic Himalayas rise clear, sharp, glistening, and well defined in the fresh morning air. There is a rosy glow, high up there, on the fretted battlements of snow, as if the Aurora had settled permanently on those towering heights of eternal whiteness and dazzling purity.

I have said that one of the outlying grants to the north was not far from the Sarda river; and my first view of the Sarda, about which I had heard so much in connection with the great irrigation schemes of the North-West Provinces, was rather disappointing.

I had been for some months at Doddpore, trying to get the mass of detail connected with the work there into proper

form; and at length, one fine morning in the Indian mid-summer, I found time to make my long deferred visit to Allengunge, the furthest outlying post of my widely-scattered charge, and situated on the banks of the Sarda.

I need not weary the reader with a detailed account of the factory work I had to undertake.

Indeed, my recollections of that trip, so far as work was concerned, are not of the most pleasant character.

I found that wholesale swindling had been going on.

Everything was in confusion.

The herds of cattle belonging to the factory had been looted right and left.

Factory lands had been settled upon surreptitiously—boundary disputes were of daily occurrence; and it was only by dint of the most vigorous and unrelaxing vigilance and effort that I managed to get matters into a fairly workable condition; and at length, after two or three weeks of unremitting toil and unflagging exertion, I managed to get things pretty fairly reduced to order, and felt that I deserved a holiday.

I had only the one elephant with me—my little "*Motee*"—and hearing that there was a piece of likely jungle close to the banks of the river, I set out one morning on horseback, telling the attendants to bring the elephant up quietly behind—my object being to make a sort of reconnaissance, with a view more of acquainting myself with "the lay of the country" than with any serious intention of having a beat.

The country on the hither side of the Sarda I found consisted almost entirely of elevated sandy ridges, the sand being of a blackish hue, mixed here and there in the hollows with a peaty loam, which was extensively cultivated, the crops being mainly rice, maize, and tobacco.

On the intervening ridges, *gingelly* and cotton were the most common crops, with here and there long strips of *urhur*,

from which the *Dhâll* pea is obtained; and in all directions, where the plough had not been used, were dense, thorny thickets of acacia, and long, straggling bits of forest land, the undergrowth in which was sparse and open.

So far as the prospects of game were concerned, I thought it, after the Koosee *dyaras* and the thickly wooded jungle near Doddpore, to be very unlikely country indeed.

But one thing I had forgotten—viz., that it was quite out of the beaten track, and had never, perhaps, been visited by European sportsmen at all; and the natives were so poor and so primitive in their ways, that I doubt very much if the sound of a gunshot had ever awakened the echoes in any of the likely haunts about the whole district.

I had a *Mussulman syce* with me—Juggeroo by name—who was a most enthusiastic sportsman, and, indeed, a good tracker, and who seemed to know instinctively every likely spot where there was any probability of our finding any big game.

We saw numerous marks of pig and deer of various kinds, and small game was abundant, but I thought there was little chance of finding any really good sport, and after a long circuit of some ten or twelve miles, I was on the point of returning, when Juggeroo earnestly besought me to visit a spot on the banks of the river some half a mile ahead, which he assured me was a very favourite haunt of tigers.

Rather sceptical, I allowed myself to be persuaded, and on we went.

At the top of a long sandy ridge, bearing evidences, in the stunted cotton bushes and withered stalks of the sesamum plant, both of the perversity of the soil and the slovenly character of the cultivation, we suddenly came to an abrupt break, which dipped straight from our feet into a densely wooded amphitheatre of luxuriant jungle growth.

It was a regular "pocket," evidently caused by some

extensive landslip into the river, the rapid waters of which, sparkling merrily over the sandy bars, we saw gleaming in the distance through the still foliage. The very smell of the air spoke to my practised senses at once that here was at last a likely spot for game.

Any man who has had a large jungle experience can tell by numberless subtle sensations, which no one can explain, whether a *locale* is a likely one or not.

I felt at once that here there was certain to be game.

It was just the very spot for a tiger.

The declivity was sufficiently deep to afford dense shade at the bottom of the hollow.

All around, the cultivated slopes were such as to afford capital stalking ground for a tiger of even the most varied and dainty tastes, as cattle, pig, and deer were plentiful.

Then the water was close by, and the covert was thick enough to afford ample security against the sudden interruption of any dangerous visitor "on hostile thoughts intent."

In fact, looking down on Juggeroo, I could see a grin of smug self-satisfaction on his face, which said as plainly as if he had spoken—"There, Sahib! didn't I tell you? What do you think of Juggeroo now?"

My look of quick response broadened the grin on his face, and when I finished the hitherto unspoken colloquy by saying to him in Hindostanee, "Yes, this will do, Juggeroo," he seemed delighted, and suggested at once that I should alight and let him ride back to bring up the elephant.

To this I agreed; and presently Juggeroo, with his bare feet in the stirrups, hammered his horny heels into my horse's ribs, and with his hair streaming behind him, like one possessed of a demon, he quickly vanished, and I was left with two or three stray villagers to more critically survey the position.

Feeling satisfied that the dingle could only be beaten by an elephant, I leisurely lit my pipe, and reclining against

a shady tree, began to enter into a conversation with the villagers.

A young lad who was with us, after some time began, in the idle, desultory way that comes natural to a man who is waiting and has little to occupy his mind, to toss some clods of earth that were lying close by into the dell below. Indeed, I was not attending to him, or perhaps I might have forbidden him.

"Behold what great events from little causes spring!" You can imagine the consternation which seized our party when after the third or fourth *divot*, as we would call it in Scotch, which he threw down, a response came from the hollow below, in the shape of a terrific roar, which set our blood tingling through every vein, blanching the faces of the natives to almost an ashen pallor, and, I am not ashamed to say, causing me in double quick time to shin up the tree beneath which I had been lying with all the celerity, if not the grace, of a professional acrobat.

The whole thing was so sudden and unexpected that I actually committed the unpardonable sin of leaving my gun behind me.

And presently, following upon the roar, out bounced a three-parts-grown young tiger—defiance glowing from his fiery eyes, his mustachios bristling with wrath, the hair on his neck as stiff as the quills of the proverbial porcupine, and his tail as stiff as a ramrod. He came tearing out just as a hawk comes down on a covey of frightened partridges.

The luckless lad who had been the immediate cause of this ebullition of wrath, was not to escape scot-free. With two or three terrific bounds, the young tiger was upon him, and with one swoop of his tremendous paw sent the poor wretch flying through the air as if he had been projected from a catapult.

Quick as a cat leaps after a mouse, the lithe young tiger bestrode the prostrate young villager, but luckily without

seeking to tear or molest him further. There he stood, a splendid embodiment of savage grace, his noble head poised grandly on his muscular neck and shoulders, his swinging tail lashing his flanks, and slowly turning his head from side to side, he growled out in a sullen undertone his defiance of all and sundry who dared to intrude upon his kingly domain.

I had now gathered my scattered wits together, and feeling ashamed of my temporary panic, I gently shifted my position from the forked branch upon which I had taken refuge, and slid down the tree as quickly as I could, and gripping my gun—a number 12 central fire, side-snap action, breech-loader, which had stood me in good stead on many a critical occasion—I hastily slipped in two ball cartridges, and peering round the bole of the tree, let the growling young savage have the contents of both barrels, one bullet taking him behind the ear, and the other going clean through his heart.

He dropped like a piece of lead right across the recumbent form of the terrified coolie; and presently I was surrounded by the exultant villagers, and we were able to drag the young fellow, saturated from head to foot in the blood of the tiger, he himself, barring a long lacerated wound across his flanks, not a bit the worse for the rough shaking of the mighty paw which he had just experienced.

And now another roar from the dense patch of jungle behind again startled our scarcely recovered nerves, and *sauve qui peut* was once more the order of the day.

I got behind my tree this time, not up it, and thought to myself that these northern tigers were a trifle more energetic in their responses than those of the grass jungle country to which I had been so long accustomed. However, beyond a terrific caterwauling and a deep bass accompaniment of surly growls, there was no further manifestation on the part of the concealed denizen or denizens, for we knew not whether

there were more than one or not in the dense jungle below.

Here too in the distance we could see the elephant approaching, in company with Juggeroo, still on horseback, and with several of my villagers and factory servants, forming quite a goodly cavalcade.

You can judge of their surprise at seeing the evidences of our sharp skirmish.

The young fellow who had been clawed, received their condolences and congratulations; while of course I came in for the usual amount of hyperbole, and was likened to the great *Ram Ram* himself, and called the biggest *Rustoom*, or hero, that had ever been heard of or seen in these parts.

Judging from the evidences just afforded us that the temper of the concealed tiger might be somewhat fiery, I determined not to subject my companions to the danger of being clawed and perhaps killed.

So telling them to retire to safe positions, and then make as much din as they liked, I got Juggeroo up with me on the *guddee*, and with a lot of clods piled between us, we put *Motee* straight for the jungle.

She evidently did not like the situation.

I should explain too that the *mahout* was not her usual driver, but a raw, inexperienced, and rather impulsive youth —worse luck, as you shall see.

Moving her fore feet ominously backwards and forwards, and curling up her trunk, she emitted a shrill piping explosion, and it was as much as the *mahout* could do to get her to face the steep descent. In fact, no sooner had she got about two body-lengths into the dense undergrowth, than another terrific growling roar from our concealed antagonists seemed to quite seal her determination as to what course she was to pursue; and in spite of buffetings and blows and angry objurgations, she resolutely refused to have anything more to do with the task we wished to set her, and

incontinently rushed out of the jungle with such evidences of "funk" as I had never seen her display on any former occasion.

Now you must not judge *Motee* too harshly.

The fact is, it was quite unfair to make her face the determined tiger in his chosen abode, when she had such a break-neck road to travel. And had her own old *mahout* been in charge, he would never have attempted to force her to do any such thing.

Some such reflection crossed my mind, and so patting poor old *Motee* on the trunk—for I had now got down, being at some distance from the jungle—she showed her appreciation of my kindness by caressing my hair with her trunk, and rumbling out a sort of muffled volume of thanks, which expressed as plainly as possible that she would do anything for me in reason, but she would be hanged if she would face the tiger in such a place as that, with no support, and with the almost certainty of getting the worst of any encounter that might ensue. "All right, old woman," I said; "we will try it in another way."

Making a wide *détour*, therefore, we got down by a rather precipitous bank to the little flat bordering the river; and from which side we could get a much better view up the dell, and were able to form some estimate of the rotten nature of the ground and the extreme difficulty of the approach which we had first attempted.

The whole circumference of the hollow could not have been more than some forty or fifty acres, but it was disrupted and riven as if by an earthquake.

Great yawning fissures were perceptible in the broken banks. There was a perfect network of hanging creepers, tumbled trees, and masses of brushwood.

And I felt certain that the growling party in this splend[id] chosen retreat was very likely an old tigress, with [a] another cub, and that it would be the height of fo[lly]

to attempt to dislodge her from such a well-chosen position with only one elephant.

And so, after posting sentinels all around the place, with strict orders to immediately report any occurrence that came within their ken, and with the promise of substantial reward in case we got the tiger, we withdrew from the jungle, flayed the youngster I had shot, and then hied back to Allengunje, where my *munshee* at once sent off mounted messengers to try to get the loan of two or three elephants, with a view to renewing the beat on the morrow.

To make a long story short, by eleven o'clock next morning four elephants came in, and all the able-bodied men from the scattered hamlets around accompanied us, bearing with them all the most murderous-looking weapons that the imagination of man could conceive—clubs, spears, reaping hooks, ancient swords, and unwieldy battle-axes, *et hoc genus omne;* and at the head of my motley crew—like Falstaff leading his ragged regiment through Coventry—away we went to the scene of our late encounter, determined this time either "to do or die."

An honest intelligent young *baboo,* son of a neighbour *zemindar,* and the proud possessor of an old matchlock, which dated possibly back to the middle of the last century, and who bestrode a savage-looking elephant belonging to his father, was my companion. I gave Juggeroo one of my spare guns, and mounted him upon another of the elephants; I rode Motee myself, and taking the two spare elephants with me to act as beaters when we reached the jungle, I posted the *baboo* and Juggeroo one on each side of the dingle, and forming a line below, of my nondescript army of beaters, we started to beat from the river bank.

This, barring the cub of the previous day, was my first [illegible]rience of a North-west tiger, and I am bound to say a [illegible]cky brute never charged a line.

[illegible] scarcely begun our operations, raising din enough

to awaken the dead, when, immediately accepting the challenge, she came roaring down on us, open-mouthed, and made for one of the elephants, leaping from the bank clean on to its head, sending the *mahout* flying off into a dense, thick, thorny scrub behind, where he lay yelling with forty horse-power lungs, and calling on all the gods and goddesses to save him from instant destruction, while the elephant, with a shrill scream of consternation and dismay, turned tail and made straight for the stream, where he got half submerged in a quicksand; while my coolies, like an ants' nest in a thunderstorm, went hurry scurry, hither and thither, casting their staves and other warlike implements behind them, and in fact such a stampede I never before witnessed.

Motee behaved, however, very pluckily, sustaining well her old character for courage.

Curling up her trunk, and setting her ears back, she hastily swirled around in the direction of the charging tiger, nearly unseating me by the rapidity of her movements; but before I could draw a line on the vixenish brute as she clawed the first elephant, the incidents which I have been describing were accomplished, and the tigress had again gone back into the jungle to sulk.

At all events her immediate object had been accomplished. Despite all my subsequent endeavours, she had succeeded in striking such "a blue funk" into the hearts of all my followers, that not one of them would again face the jungle.

In vain I entreated, commanded, promised, besought, stormed, raved, and, I am sorry to say, swore. But as it was in Hindostanee perhaps it doesn't count.

It was no use.

Not one of my craven crew would face the jungle.

With my heart swelling with indignation, and my gorge rising in disgust, I at length determined to tackle the b[illegible] single-handed.

So putting Motee once more face to the foe, we

entered the cover by a winding beaten path, that seemed to have been made by the deer and other wild beasts coming down to the river to drink, and we had not penetrated far into the shade before the gallant tigress, with a terrific roar, seeming nothing loath to accept our challenge, came bounding out again straight at the elephant.

This time I was enabled to get a quick snap shot, which must have taken her somewhere in the hindquarters. She must have been a bit of a "cock-tail" after all, for with a howl of mingled rage and pain, her warlike fury seemed to collapse all of a sudden, and turning tail in the most currish manner, she slunk away among the undergrowth; and presently hearing a terrific hullabaloo from the bank above, we withdrew from our position, only to receive the assurances of the excited mob high above our heads, that the tigress was making off across the stream, with her tail between her legs, and evidently hard hit.

Ah, now! what a revulsion of feeling in the bosoms, what a change in the attitudes of the dusky warriors!

How proudly they swelled out their chests like pouter pigeons, and told what they "*would have done*" if the Sahib had only waited! How they plumed themselves on their bravery, and with what eagerness they pressed advice upon me to follow up without loss of time! And here came in a string of adjectives reflecting upon the poor tigress's ancestors which I had better leave unrecorded.

However, as the day was young, and the tigress evidently wounded, I determined to at once follow up the trail.

And so, acting most foolishly on impulse, as the sequel will prove, began one of the most wearisome and disastrous stern chases it has ever been my bad fortune to take part in.

The country of the Sarda was indeed "a dry and weary [illegible] its character.

Great rolling successions of undulating sand-dunes, with not a particle of vegetation, except rank, harsh, wiry bent-grass in unsightly clumps, and ever and anon a barricade of thorny acacia bushes. Here and there sweltering pools of stagnant water, covered with a greenish, glairy scum; and as the hot winds swept across the inhospitable expanse, swirling columns of sand whirled and eddied around, like mad dancing dervishes, and the blazing sun shot forth his fiery darts with ruthless directness; in fact, a more bare, bleak, uninviting tract of country it would be difficult to imagine.

This was doubtless the old bed of the Sarda, and extended for miles to the north, right away up, in fact, to the BAHRAICH *Talook*, beyond the swift-flowing Gogra on the south, and right away northwards to the Nepaul Terai without a break. Indeed for leagues there is not a vestige of human habitation in this barren and inhospitable wilderness.

And into this wild and forbidding tract I was rushing with all the temerity of a rash, inexperienced young fool, when I really ought to have known better.

But so it was, and what will not an ardent sportsman do when he sees the stripes of a wounded tiger practically, as he thinks, within his grasp?

To tell the truth, I lost my head, and what added to my misfortune, my young and inexperienced *mahout* and attendants lost theirs too.

Our miscalculation was a disastrous one for me, as will presently be shown.

We all thought that the tigress could only go for a short distance, and that we would be sure very speedily to bring her to bay; but we little knew the demon we had to deal with.

And so the *mahout* began to ply toe and heels on the elephant's neck, in the most approved usual fashion, digging his hard toes behind the poor brute's ears, wriggling

seat as if he was trying to win the Derby; and to the accompaniment of a series of resounding whacks with the *gudjbaz* or goad on the poor elephant's cranium, we plunged into the swift current of the Sarda, sending the spray flying before us, and amid the most intense excitement we emerged on the other side, seeing the tigress at a considerable distance ahead, just disappearing behind an undulating ridge of sand, and apparently very hard hit.

Away we went in wild pursuit.

The jolting motion of the elephant was anything but pleasant, and I had to hang on by the ropes with one hand, and keep hold of my gun with the other.

We topped the sandbank just in time to see her majesty disappearing over the succeeding ridge in front, but seemingly going as fresh as before.

Our poor elephant put on all the pace she knew, but we did not seem to gain on the tigress.

After we had covered perhaps two or three miles in this fashion, I began to dimly realise that after all we were not to have such an easy prey as we had imagined.

And even then I would have turned back, but that my infernal *mahout*, for a wonder, strongly urged me to go on, and so on we went.

To make a long story short, we followed up our retreating quarry for miles, and to this day I have grave doubts as to whether that never-to-be-sufficiently-objurgated brute was not possessed by some malign spirit, some baleful enticing demon, seeking to lure us on to our destruction.

At any rate, after experiencing agonies of thirst; with the fierce excitement of the chase long since pounded out of me, depressed with the inevitable reaction from strong emotion, with my tongue feeling like a piece of parched leather, and temples throbbing as if the veins would burst, we were warned by the lengthening shades that the day was spent, and I had begun to fully realise the actual

danger of our position, when to my dismay I found that the *mahout* knew nothing of the country, and the elephant began to show signs of being thoroughly fagged. Of course the others had hours ago tailed off, and we two were alone in this wild and weary wilderness.

By this time the tigress (the demon-possessed tigress) had evidently vanished apparently into thin air, for we saw no more of her. May maledictions pursue her!

Then began such a night of pain and thirst and weariness as I hope never again to experience. No doubt, too, I was sickening for the fever that afterwards fell upon me.

We began to cast about for water, or sign of habitation, but we were verily in a desert land, for sign of life or water was there none; and by-and-by the blood-red sun sank to rest behind the distant bronzed horizon, and the great full-orbed moon came slowly sailing up, flooding the bleak sand ridges with a ghastly light; and as if all the evil spirits of Gadara had revisited "the glimpses of the moon;" baying packs of jackals seemed to start up around us from every hollow, and the unearthly chorus struck a weird, uncanny chill upon our already drooping spirits.

We were now hopelessly bewildered.

In searching for the water the *mahout* had completely lost all knowledge of his whereabouts; and instead of leaving the elephant to find its way by its own unaided intelligence, as we ought to have done, the stupid man kept directing it hither and thither, in a most aimless fashion, until at length the poor brute began to show signs of resentment, and falling into a fit of the sulks, commenced rocking and shaking most violently, in the attempt to dislodge us from its wearied back. Here was a pretty kettle of fish!

But in all sober seriousness it was no light matter.

I cannot describe to you my sensations. I was rack[ed] with pain, and a consuming thirst had possession of me. I fancy I must have received a slight sunstrok[e].

the day, and so when, at length, utterly wearied and unnerved, I slid to the ground, a fit of trembling came upon me, and I must have become unconscious. My next recollection was awaking as if from a horrid nightmare, and sitting up in a dazed manner I found myself entirely alone, with a pack of some fifteen or twenty jackals, squatting on their haunches all around me, and gazing on me with greedy eyes that blazed like live coals; and they seemed to be apparently debating amongst themselves whether they should "go for me straight," or wait until the breath left my helpless body altogether, when I would fall an easier prey to their unholy appetites.

The strangest and most whimsical absurdities flashed through my brain.

One mangy old brute, lying down at full length, struck me as being like an old woman that used to sell toffee in my old native village when I was a boy, and I could not help laughing as the brute champed its yellow fangs, licking its hungry chops, and, as I thought, leering at me in a most horribly suggestive and familiar fashion.

I fancy I must have been still somewhat delirious, and what my fate might have been I know not, had not, fortunately, two of the jackals begun snarling at each other; and the whole pack, open-tongued, gave utterance to the most unearthly, diabolical series of long-drawn yells which would not have shamed the dogs of Cerberus himself.

I suppose this roused me a bit, for staggering to my feet I raised my gun, and immediately the cowardly pack scattered as if a rocket had burst amongst them. Shaking in every limb, my knees trembling under me, my dry tongue almost rattling in my mouth, every sense lost in the one agonising desperate desire for water, I staggered on, plunging wildly [illegible]ut, yet with a blind instinct clutching my gun; and [illegible] I must have fallen and become unconscious, for when [illegible]o myself the morning sun was struggling to cast

his feeble, fitful rays through a dense canopy of fog that had settled down on this bleak, inhospitable tract, and sitting up I ruefully surveyed my forlorn surroundings. I was racked with pain and stupid with fever, and yet that scene is burned in upon my memory.

At a little distance in front of me was a slight depression, filled with mimosa bushes; and the thought struck me, that perhaps by digging with my hunting-knife I might find water.

I was in a burning fever, and very weak—so weak that I had to crawl on my hands and knees to the hollow.

This happy inspiration doubtless saved my life. After a weak and weary effort, I came upon water, and saturating my handkerchief in the unwholesome-looking liquid, I squeezed it again and again into my mouth, until at length I began to feel a little refreshed.

But oh, that weary, weary day!

All day long, until about mid-afternoon, I must have lain there beside this scooped-out hole, with the hot sun beating down upon me, and when at length my fellows found me, I was in a raving delirium and fever, and how I got back to the factory I know not to this day.

At all events, the result of that unlucky adventure was the breaking up of my jungle home: I was ordered to take a sea voyage round to Bombay, where I lay for nearly two months, almost helpless with rheumatic fever, and eventually I had to seek a radical change by a trip to Australia; but not before I had come back to my lonely post in the jungle, where I made a brave effort to combat my growing weakness, in the endeavour to fulfil the trust imposed on me, but in such an unequal contest I of course soon had to succumb.

CHAPTER XIX.

INCIDENTS OF THE "BIG BEAT."

News from the military — Arrangements for grazing commissariat elephants—Advent of a jolly party—News of big game—An imposing procession—The start—The country—Lagging behind—A sudden apparition—"A Sambur, by Jove!!"—Only a Swamp deer after all—Points of difference—We proceed down the river—A likely spot for game—A sudden diversion—The monkeys' warning—A hurried consultation—Briggs left on the watch—Grows impatient—Determines to reconnoitre—A soliloquy—A wary stalk—"A sight that sets his ears a tingling"—"Angry green eyes glaring"—Bang!—A miss—A shot and a charge simultaneously—Bullet and teeth both "get home"—Poor Briggs carried home—After the cubs next day—The "Old General" in charge—Discovery and capture of the cubs—A likely spot for leopard—Gopal on the track—"Not one but two leopards"—They will not break—Halt for tiffin and send for fireworks—One more try—The end of a memorable day.

ONE day, while vainly trying to bear up against my growing weakness, I was lying on a couch in my cool and darkened middle room, which served as parlour, drawing and dining room all in one, when a baying chorus of yelps and barks, and every variety of canine noises, apprised me that some stranger had surely broken in upon my forest solitude.

I heard the clatter of accoutrements, the black panther tugged at his chain, growling hoarsely, the horses neighed loudly from the stables, the denizens of the fowl-yard added their cackling clamour to the general din, and then my soft-[illegible] *bearer* came in to tell me that a *shutr sowar* waited [illegible] with a message for "His Highness"—that was for

me. (A *shutr sowar* is a mounted camel trooper.) Going out, I found a fine picturesque-looking and most soldierly fellow, who had come from Sitapore, and was the bearer of various pleasant *chits* from my friends the officers stationed there with their regiment. They had heard of my illness, and were anxious to know if I would be well enough to put them up if they came across, as they intended, a few of them, to make a hunting trip to my jungles. There was also a letter from one of the Government officers belonging to the Commissariat department, saying he had been informed that I had extensive grazing rights "to let" in my jungles, and wishing to know if there was forage enough for about forty commissariat elephants, what I would charge per head, and generally full particulars. He had a large number of elephants under his charge, and they needed rest, and a spell in the forest for a few months.

I may as well at once inform the reader that I succeeded in making a bargain with the Captain, to allow the elephants the full range of the jungles for four months, at thirty rupees per head, the attendants to have the right of cutting fodder as they pleased, in certain defined localities: and very shortly thereafter the ponderous brutes arrived, and were formed into two camps; and I started a small bazaar to supply the men in charge with grain, salt, and their other simple wants. This helped me much in my work of village settlement and the little bazaar has long since become a flourishing village.

I sent back a message to my friends, making arrangements for the proposed hunting trip, and in due time they arrived.

We managed to persuade our friend the Captain to allow us the use of some dozen of the best elephants; and one fine morning we started across the Kutna, to beat up the fore in the direction of my friend and neighbour the old Gene place, and a merry and motley party we were. Fo venience sake I will use fictitious names.

There was old Major Burns, Captain Steel in charge of the elephants, Captain Green, a gallant young Lieutenant named Briggs, and myself. I was still very *shikust*, that is, weak, "washed out," "seedy;" but the jovial company had roused me up a bit, and as we had ample supplies of all those creature comforts that aid so much to make life bearable in India, we felt pretty jolly on the whole.

Some two miles from my bungalow the sluggish creek opened out into a series of marshy shallows, thickly overgrown with reeds, and it was reported that a tiger, or a leopard—some accounts said a pair, for the reports were conflicting—had here formed a lair, and he, she, or they was or were in the habit of levying black-mail on the scanty flocks and herds of the scattered forest dwellers in the vicinity. This part of the forest did not lie under my charge, and, truth to tell, I knew very little about the locality; but we were to meet the "Old General" on the ground, and he knew every inch of the country, and he was to take the direction of the hunt.

It was a picturesque sight to see the straggling but imposing procession of stately elephants, with here and there a *howdah*, surmounted by the white-coated *sahibs*, with their broad, mushroom-looking sun hats. The *cortège* included numbers of my red-turbaned peons, from down country, several trim-whiskered Rajputs of the district, numbers of my wood-cutters with ragged blue *puggrees*, and clothing of the scantiest, and a goodly number of the nondescript tatterdemalion crew that invariably turn up from "Heaven knows where" whenever there is "a big beat" afoot. Here were charcoal-burners, swart and grimy, cowherds from the forest country to the north, with long elf-like locks, weather-beaten faces, and a look of resolute daring, mingled with a [illegible]ning, leering, furtive expression which was very suggestive [illegible]ny an unauthorised foray into the territory of some [illegible] with whom they were on hostile terms, and whose

cattle accordingly were held to be lawful spoil. We had several professional trackers of course, and under the most favourable auspices we sallied forth, crossed the sluggish ford, and plunged into the gloomy recesses of the thick *Sal* forest beyond.

The ground we found to be rather rocky and difficult. Near the Kutna, in the low lands, the swamps were frequent, and the ground treacherous, so for the time being we had to skirt a rocky, barren range, that lay parallel to the course of the stream, and which afforded but poor cover for game, and naturally we, or rather they, pushed on as fast as we could, in the endeavour to reach our trysting-ground while yet the day was young.

Briggs and I were lagging behind, and so indifferent were we to our surroundings, that we were chatting away quite unconcernedly, and smoking our cigars, and letting the *mahouts* do pretty much with us as they liked. These, wishing to spare the elephants the trouble of surmounting the rocky ridge, over which our motley train had already disappeared, took the low ground by the river, which, though soft and slushy, and slightly longer as to distance, was still much easier for the big brutes on which we were leisurely riding.

A patch of thick *nurkul* skirted the swamp. The *nurkul* was juicy, succulent, and green. The elephants sidled towards it, and the brushing of the long reeds against my *howdah* was the first intimation I had that we had fallen out of the line. I was seated most comfortably, with my legs up on the front bar, puffing away at a particularly nice number one Manilla, when all of a sudden I saw Briggs, who was similarly engaged, start up, pitch his cigar away, seize his gun, and, following with my eye the outstretched hand of the *mahout*, who was eagerly pointing ahead, distinguished through the *nurkul* the fine branching horns of a noble stag.

"A Sambur! Maori! By Jove!" yelled Briggs, letting drive at the same moment, and the quick thud that followed, told us that the bullet had sped home.

The noble brute made a convulsive leap forward, three hinds simultaneously dashing with him into the sluggish water, here covered with dead leaves and a brown scum, and as the wounded stag gallantly breasted the torpid current, Briggs put another bullet into him, and he only reached the further bank to fall prone to earth; and there he lay, convulsively struggling, till at length he turned over on his side, his antlered head fell slowly back, and he rolled down the bank, stone dead, into the water.

"Bravo Briggs!" said I, quite pleased at my friend's success.

"Oh, I'm so glad, old man!" responded Briggs. "I have been longing so to kill a *Sambur*." I had my doubts as to its being a real Sambur; and when we had secured our prize, by the aid of some of the attendants that the sound of our firing had brought to the spot, I had no difficulty in deciding that it was a very fine specimen of the Marsh or Swamp deer (*Rucervus Duvaucellii*). The Sambur (*Cervus Aristotelis*) is very often mistaken for the Swamp deer; but any one who has shot both, and narrowly observed the differences, would not be likely to make the mistake. The confusion often arises, no doubt, from the natives using the same name to both, indifferently.

Broadly speaking, the Sambur is a somewhat larger animal than the Swamp deer. His coat is darker and more shaggy, and he has a mane not unlike the Red deer at home. He frequents, too, comparatively elevated and broken ground, while the Swamp deer, as the name implies, loves to haunt the vicinity of marshes, and may often be found in the heat of the day, when the flies are troublesome, immersed up to the neck nearly, like an old buffalo in the water; and at any time may be found in great herds, in suitable localities,

browsing on the aquatic plants, to reach which he will wade in till the water is up to his shoulders. He has a bright red, shining coat, as glossy generally as that of a well-groomed horse, and very often may be observed a line of indistinct whitish spots on either side of the ridge along the back: while the Sambur has no marking of any such sort to disturb the uniformity of his dun-brown coat. The skin of the Sambur is thicker and more valuable than that of the Swamp deer. (I had a pair of Sambur skin slippers once made for me in Calcutta, that I wore for over ten years, and they were pretty well in constant use.) The young of both are very much alike, but the difference in size, in colour, in the setting of the horns, and other distinct and marked points of divergence, are quite sufficient to settle the disputed point to any unprejudiced mind.

However, Briggs would have it that he had killed a Sambur. And we had the whole matter thoroughly discussed in the bungalow that night, and the notes I have above recorded are the result of that discussion.

Being elated with this piece of luck, we very naturally, as I imagine, determined to stick to the river. I had in fact never before visited this part of the forest, and being assured by one or two of the attendant hangers-on that deer and pig were numerous farther down, we, after padding the slaughtered stag, proceeded on our way.

We certainly thought ourselves under a fortunate star, for after leaving the swampy patch in which we had just been so lucky, we crossed a swelling spur of the high land, which here trended downwards toward the river, causing the stream to make a wide bend to the south. And on the other side I recognised a bit of a grassy glade, with a towering *Semul* tree on its far side, which I knew from past experience to be a favourite haunt of various kinds of deer.

What lay beyond this spur, however, I knew not, and topping the rise we were agreeably surprised to find

large stretch of swampy country, which lay at right angles to the Kutna, and which in fact proved to be the valley or water-shed of a sinuous, sluggish, forest tributary of the Kutna itself, and as it was well grassed throughout, with here and there clumps of denser green where the tall *nurkul* waved its feathery tops, I congratulated Briggs on our happy discovery, and we prepared to descend into the grass, when a sudden diversion took place which had the effect of altering our plans.

At a little distance to the right of where we stood was a thick clump of bright and glossy Jhamun bushes, and just beyond that a stately *Mhowa* tree in full flower, scenting the whole glade with its luscious, rather sickly perfume; and just as we appeared on the scene, a troop of monkeys—the individuals of which had been regaling themselves on the sticky mass of fallen flowers—suddenly sprung up helter skelter from the ground, scampered in wild affright hand over hand, from branch to branch, and then from their vantage ground of overhanging boughs gave vent to an extraordinary series of short, sharp, hoarse barking sounds which once heard is always significant. Briggs was amused. He thought this was merely their mode of venting their anger at our intrusion, but I did not think they had yet seen us.

I had heard that signal too often before and knew what it meant.

"Hold hard!" I hissed out to Briggs.

"*What!*" ("Halt!") this to the *mahout*.

"What's up?" said the bewildered Briggs, seeing plainly from my looks that there was something important on the *tapis*.

"There must be a tiger or leopard there," I said in a low, impressive tone.

I had scarce uttered the words, when another fierce ring demonstration from the monkeys seemed to te my warning, and our surmises were further

strengthened by the corroboration of one or two of the experienced foresters who were standing close by the elephants, who huddled up closer to us, and told us that there must doubtless be a tiger beside the *Mhowa* tree.

Now the little valley, as I have said, was well grassed. The thick forest extended beyond, and if there was the chance of getting a tiger, I knew it would be futile to try to beat him up with only two elephants.

We moved back behind the shelter of the rise, and after a hasty consultation, it was resolved that I would take one of the trackers with me, hasten after the rest of our party, and bring them back, while Briggs should quietly wait, and watch the ground.

At once I set off on my errand, and left Briggs with a fervent injunction to be patient, and NOT spoil sport by moving a step till we returned.

I found that the Major and party had been seduced into following a troop of spotted deer, and after a long search I at length found them several miles out of the track they should have taken, and not in the very sweetest humour either, as they were under the impression, until I undeceived them, that they were very near the rendezvous where we expected to meet "The General."

They had shot at, but missed, numerous deer, and were cursing the jungles, their luck, the elephants, themselves and my own poor self; and wondering where I had got to, when my news completely changed the current and tone of their thoughts; and after a "*peg*" all round, we lost no time in beginning to retrace our steps.

Now this is what was happening elsewhere.

Briggs, never noted for excessive wisdom, quite inexperienced in the ways of Indian woodcraft, and blissfully ignorant of the peculiarities of elephants and tigers, began to grow impatient.

For a time he watched the antics of the monk

vigilant and excited on their tree. Then, getting tired of his cramped position in the howdah, for the elephant had been well withdrawn, back into the shade of the valley near the river, he made the *mahout* move her back still a bit farther, and getting down to stretch his legs, he lit a cigar (a most foolish thing to do under such circumstances), while the *mahout* tightened the *howdah* ropes. Next the socially-disposed *mahout* prepared and shared with the three or four attendants who were waiting with him, a palm full of *Soortee;* that is, in vulgar parlance, "a chew of baccy," prepared *à la Hindostanee,* by briskly rubbing together some acrid tobacco leaf, some powdered betel-nut, and some specially prepared lime. A pinch of this delectable *bonne bouche* is then handed to each friend, while the remainder is thrown from the grimy palm into the wide distended mouth of the operator, and then the delicious sensation of chewing begins, and a feeling of supreme content steals over the gratified senses, descending even to the regions of the œsophagus.

Well, this did not particularly interest Briggs.

The demon of curiosity now took possession of him.

"What harm could there be," he asked himself, "if he stole cautiously forward to reconnoitre?"

There *could* be no danger. He *would* be very cautious. Besides, had he not his gun with him? What a glorious lark if he could bag the tiger to his own cheek, if it was a tiger! Perhaps after all "Maori" was mistaken, and it might only be a pig, or even a deer. Besides, how *could* any one tell what meaning should be attached to the jabber and chatter of a lot of monkeys? How long that fellow "Maori" was in coming back! Hang it all! He would chance it. Just a quiet peep to see if there was *really* anything stirring or not!"

All this passed through Briggs's brain, I have no doubt. At all events he yielded to temptation; and with a make-assumption of the most innocent unconcern, though

his heart was going pit-a-pat, he left the little group beside the elephant, and began a slow wary approach towards the brow of the hill again, making this time a deviation to the right, which would bring him up abreast of the line of the *Mhowa* tree.

Of course every blessed monkey had its eye on him now at every step he took, and signified their contempt for his inexperience by grinning and chattering at him as he stooped and dodged from bush to bush and from tree to tree. Of course, too, every beast of the jungle, from the frisky little squirrel behind the big *Bael* tree on his right, the *Saap goh* or iguana, in the hollow log beside him, down to the jackal with his two wives slouching along beside the water in the swampy hollow, were all watching his every movement, and he, poor fellow, all the time imagining that he was doing his stalk so splendidly and so unobserved.

Why, the golden oriole as it flitted swiftly past exchanged a look full of amused contempt with the meditative owl that, with half-open but very observant "peepers," vigilantly watched every movement of the sublimely unconscious and self-deluded Briggs.

But now he has breasted the rise. The *Mhowa* tree is within thirty paces of him.

There is a friendly screen of jhamun bushes, behind which he creeps, as he thinks, all unseen and unnoted.

Stooping down, he cautiously and gently presses aside the intervening twigs, and there—right in front of him—not twenty paces away—he sees a sight that sets his ears tingling—causes his nerves to twitch, and his face to flame, as every drop of blood goes bounding at accelerated speed through every vein of his intensely excited and eager frame.

Briggs, mind you, was no coward. Not he! Briggs as bold as a lion, and about as inexperienced as a gosli

shires at home, and after a *bobbery* pack, for a short time killing jackals in a sporting civil station in *Lower Bengal.*

His first impulse was to yell out "Yoicks tally ho!"

His second impulse, quick as thought, was to bring his gun to his shoulder.

There, right in front of him, quite out in the open, lay a magnificent tigress on her side! Her lithe lail twitched spasmodically from side to side, with short, sharp, nervous jerks. A sleek pair of well-grown cubs sprawled playfully about her majestic form; and like a great cat as she was, she rolled about, now on her back, now on her side, now right over, with ears back, and great mustachios twitching, and mighty paws held aloft, the cruel claws extending and retracting, and for a minute the gleaming fangs showing like a fleck of white upon a blood-red ground, as the file-like tongue licked the paws. She was for a wonder quite off her guard, and all unconscious of the near proximity of a foe.

That suggestive tongue and those gleaming fangs sobered Briggs like a sudden *douche* of cold water. The flame died away from his cheeks, his quivering nerves became rigid as steel, all in an instant.

He had brought his piece to full cock, and the noise, slight as it was, had apprised the graceful but suspicious and cruel beast that her solitude had been invaded.

Lithe and light, swift as thought, and supple as an eel, she bounded up, and for a moment she stood with angry green eyes glaring at the bushes, behind which lay the rash intruding Briggs. The two cubs, with backs arched, their bristles stiff, and spitting like angry tom cats, had, as if by an electric touch, found themselves cowering behind the alarmed tigress mother. What a picture of savage life!

For the life of him Briggs could have done no other than [illegible]id. . . . He fired!!

[illegible]hand *must* have been shaking, though he swears to [illegible]hat he was as cool as a cucumber.

Bang! went the piece! The bullet went singing harmlessly away over the waving reeds in the swampy dingle. The monkeys shook the branches with both hands, screamed, barked hoarsely, and "raised Cain generally." The little squirrel rushed in wild affright to the topmost bough of his friendly tree; and the slouching jackal with his harem turned tail and fled incontinently from the scene.

A thin spiral column of smoke curls up above the *Jhamun* bushes, and, if one had been near, a muttered exclamation which sounded very like a British expletive of one syllable, and beginning with "a big big D," might have been distinctly heard.

The angry green light flashes lurid and uncanny in the eyes of the crouching tigress now. Her creamy paunch presses the ground, and her terrible striped flanks are twitching and quivering with nervous and muscular force, as she lays her ears back, and draws aside her cruel lips, so that her gleaming fangs are clearly seen.

What an embodiment of devilish cruelty, of hate and savagery incarnate!

"God help you now, good Briggs, if your second bullet speeds as idly as the first!"

Bang! Crash! The report and the spring are simultaneous.

The bullet HAS found a billet this time; but the cruel claws and teeth have got home too.

When, some half-an-hour later, the cavalcade of elephants reached the spot, we found poor Briggs half dead from pain and loss of blood; a fearful seam across his brow, laying both temples bare, and a great ugly, punctured wound in his thigh, where the dying tigress had made her teeth meet.

The bullet had gone right through the fierce brute's heart, but she had made good her charge. With one terrific sweep of her great paw she had almost scalped poor Briggs, who had instinctively ducked his head and thus saved his

for had the tigress caught him fair, she would doubtless have dislocated his neck, and ended his sporting career there and then for ever. This blow stunned him, and he remembered no more until we brought him to with a drop of brandy forced between his clenched teeth. The tigress had fallen in a heap upon him, and beyond the last dying bite in his thigh, and a few insignificant bruises and scratches, he was otherwise unhurt.

The little group of attendants down in the hollow had after a time mustered up courage, being emboldened by the stillness, and when we arrived, we found them attempting to staunch the wounds of poor Briggs, and with his poor torn scalp resting on the prostrate body of his slain foe, he did look a most ghastly and distressful sight indeed.

"Well, what happened next?"

"I need not keep you in suspense. Briggs recovered. He had careful nursing and skilful surgery, and he has shot many a tiger since then. But—and here lies the moral.

NEVER AGAIN ON FOOT!

This misadventure, as you may imagine, spoilt our sport, and put an end to further proceedings for that day. We conveyed the wounded Briggs back to my bungalow, sent in to Sitapur for the doctor, and acquainted "The General," by messenger, of the accident, and in the evening we had the satisfaction of seeing his burly form and jovial face at table, and full many a tale of stirring jungle life and vivid sporting incident did he that night recite to us.

Next day poor Briggs was very feverish and in great pain.

I remained behind with him, as in duty bound, and in truth I was pretty well on the invalid list myself, and "The General," therefore must tell you how they managed to [illegible]re the cubs. I simply tell the tale as told to me.

[illegible]t morning the Major, with Steel, Green, and the "Old [illegible]" made an early start, and sending my pony on to

the *ghat*, I accompanied the elephants that far; then taking a *détour* through the forest to see my coolies at work on the several clearings, I rejoined poor little Briggs in the bungalow, and did my best to alleviate his sufferings through the day.

The hunting party meanwhile made good progress down the river, and on arriving at the scene of Briggs's misadventure, they formed line, and proceeded to beat the jungle from south to north. The ground, right in the centre, was too boggy for the elephants, but din enough was raised to startle, one would have thought, every living thing out of its recesses. The occupants of the various *guddees* and *howdahs* threw clods and stones into every clump of bushes and grass that the elephants could not reach, but not a rustle or sign of any living thing rewarded their efforts.

Knowing well how close a tiger will lie, and rightly assuming that the cubs would not likely have gone far from cover, "The General" was not satisfied, even after they had thus beaten the jungle twice lengthways, and once again across from corner to corner.

A number of the natives having become emboldened somewhat by the apparent absence of anything uncanny, now boldly leapt into the jungle, and plunging about in the miry and uncertain foothold, belaboured the bushes and clumps with their long *lathees*, poked their spears into every likely recess, and had gone nearly three-parts through the tangled brake, when a joyful shout from Green announced a discovery. He had gone saunteringly and quite aimlessly round to the northern end of the little valley, and passing close to a rather overhanging ledge of rock which jutted forward from the hillside, he discovered in a sparse fringe of trailing bushes the objects of their quest.

There lay the two little vixens, not bigger than spaniels, their green eyes glaring in the semi-obscurity; and with their backs set against the hollow in the cleft rock, they spat and spat and showed their teeth in such defiant fa[illegible]

to make the attempt to capture them alive anything but an inviting or engaging task.

At Green's shout a number of the beaters near the edge of the jungle hurried up, and presently the Major jolted up on his elephant to enjoy the spectacle of the lucky find.

Now, right in the centre of the morass, in the most inaccessible part of it, there was a dense tangled patch of jungle, consisting of *Thamun* and other bushes all interlaced and tangled together; the still black water showing clear around the gnarled and twisted roots and branches. A sort of natural platform had been formed by the deposition of layers of flood-wrack at different times; and both "The General" and Steel, who were old, experienced *shikarees*, had noted the spot as just the very place a leopard would choose for a stronghold.

They had noticed, too, that while a few egrets and waterhens had been flushed from other parts of the swamp, not a solitary bird had been seen near this most likely of all spots, where they might have been most looked for.

The beaters, too, seemed to manifest a strange and suspicious aversion to going near the place; and the elephants betrayed a very suggestive and significant inquietude when brought as close up to it as the nature of the boggy ground permitted.

At the first beat Steel had said, "By Jove! what a place for leopard!"

"The General" now came up, and quietly said to Steel—

"I say, old man, I could almost swear there's something lying up in that *Baree* there"—pointing to the tangled thicket I have just described.

"Hi! Gopal!" he shouted to a lean, cadaverous,. old who stood apart from the others, on the bank.

tucking up his clothes inside his waistbelt, im-

Vincent Brooks, Day & Son. Lith.

...scene. Elephants enjoying themselves.

mediately responded to the summons, and plunged into the jungle.

"Gopal," said "The General," in a low tone and in Hindostanee, "we think there's a *janwar* inside here. The others are afraid to go in—are you afraid?"

"Whatever 'the Protector of the Poor' orders, *that* will his slave perform," was the ready answer of Gopal.

"Bravo! then see! get round if possible to that firm landing-stage on the other side, and note the signs."

"*Bahut utchha,*" was all the response. Divesting his wiry frame of every shred of clothing, and handing his clothes up to the *mahout*, keeping only his *puggaree* on which he more tightly wound round his elf-like locks, Gopal, cautiously probing with his iron-bound staff, and feeling the inky, oozy depths in front of him, slipped in up to his shoulders, and half swimming, half floundering, lurched across the worst part of the treacherous ooze, and presently emerged, dripping with mud and water and slime, on to a quaking sort of island, right in the centre of the swamp, whereon no foot of beater had yet trod.

One quick glance around, a step or two forward, a close, peering scrutiny among the sedge and bushes, then with a quick, lithe, backward motion, Gopal seemed to glide like a snake backwards into the water again, and hurrying back announced to "The General," while his eyes fairly blazed with excitement, that there were evidently *not one*, BUT TWO LEOPARDS even now in the thicket. The marks were fresh, and there could be no doubt on the matter.

"Ah, I thought so!"

"Didn't I tell you?" broke simultaneously from the lips of "The General" and Steel. Just at this moment it was that Green's joyful shout announced the discovery of the two tiger cubs, already narrated.

Glad, rather, of the diversion, our two friends their way out of the jungle, and rejoined Green

Major, and very shortly the full strength of the party was congregated round the hollow, in the depths of which the two cubs were now plainly visible.

The little beggars were not captured without a tussle. But at length, by cutting down bundles of reeds, and with these blocking up the sides of the crevice, and then pushing these fascines before them, the natives were able almost to smother the two hapless little cubs, and after a deal of scuffling and excitement the two young tigers were fairly caught, enveloped in country-made blankets, and, despite their snarling and fighting and biting, were strapped and tied down, and consigned to safe keeping.

"Now, boys," said "The General," "we had better have a go at the leopards."

"A go at the leopards?" said the Major. "What leopards?"

"What do you mean?" queried Green.

"Mean!" quoth Steel. "He means that there's a pair of leopards in the *Baree* there, that's all!"

The others were still incredulous, till Gopal was recalled and re-examined, and then the ardour of the chase revived, and it was resolved to make a determined effort to dislodge the two spotted robbers from their stronghold.

Well, to make a long story short, they tried for over two hours to force the leopards to break.

Despite large promises of reward, the beaters only perfunctorily performed their functions. Gopal was the only one that would venture across the Stygian bog; and he, armed with a puggaree full of stones, once again forced his way across; and although he succeeded in actually getting a glimpse of one of the leopards, he could not prevail on them to break.

Fact was, the two brutes knew well enough the impregnability of their position.

Fact by-and-by became discernible to "the General."

"Boys! it's no use," he said. "They will never break while so many of us are all around. Small blame to them! let's go to lunch."

So posting various scouts to keep watch, an adjournment was made for tiffin, and a messenger was despatched on horseback for sundry persuaders from the bungalow, in the shape of native bombs and other fireworks, which are very often used in like circumstances, where the beaters are afraid to enter the cover, as in the present case; and as a rule the bombs are used with signal success.

So it was on this occasion.

A dead silence settled down over the little swampy valley, so recently the scene of wild din and commotion.

Possibly the leopards thought the danger all over. They were mistaken if they thought anything of the kind.

It was now getting late in the afternoon, and the shadows were lengthening. "The General" had posted his men judiciously and well. The messenger had returned with a load of fire bombs. The line of beaters, now swelled by various additions from the villages round the jungle, were marshalled in imposing array by "The General" himself; and then, at a given signal, they gave tongue like a pack of hounds, pressed into the covert, and when near enough, the old Director of the Hunt, igniting one—two—three of the bombs, hurled them with all his force right into the heart of the dense covert, where it was known the sulky and treacherous quarry lurked.

The combined din of the yelling beaters rent the air. The very elephants seemed to catch the contagion and trumpeted shrilly with excitement. The sputtering bombs fizzled and crackled, and emitted a dense grey column of smoke, and then breaking into active ignition, there was a hissing roar, as they volleyed forth their pent-up fires; and with a sharp note of rage and defiance the two leopards sprang from their long hugged covert, and while on

at once to a well-directed shot from Steel, who was advantageously posted, the other doubled like a hare, sprang unharmed through the beaters, and quickly disappeared over the brow of the eminence right behind the line.

The wounded one lay sprawling and floundering, making impotent attempts to get up and do mischief; but it was "spined" (the shot had been a lucky one); and presently it got its "*coup de grace*," and was padded.

Then away went the whole cavalcade in hot pursuit after the survivor of the long and wearisome beat.

They never caught it up.

So ended a very memorable hunt. Briggs was so bad that he had to be taken into the station, and I became so ill that I had in a few days to follow him; and shortly afterwards I left the Oude jungles, never again I fear to revisit them, and for many months—first at Bombay, then at Bareilly with my brother, then in Calcutta—I fairly fought with death, and by-and-by, after long, long months of pain and weariness, I found renewed health and a fresh lease of life in the glorious atmosphere of sunny Australia, laden with the scent of the fragrant gum trees, and redolent with the perfume of the golden wattle bloom.

Before closing these sketches of my old forest life, however, I must narrate an adventure which befell my dear old forest companion "The General."

However strained and unnatural may seem the narrative, I have reason to believe it is not one whit exaggerated; and nothing I could relate of my own personal experiences could more vividly bring before the mind of the reader the wild life and startling vicissitudes which pertain to the lot of the lonely pioneer in a frontier Indian district.

CHAPTER XX.

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS IN A LIVING TOMB.

Native and European ideas of sport contrasted—Illustrations—Pitfalls—How formed—A morning tour of inspection—Prepare for pea-fowl—Method of the sport—Start a herd of spotted deer—Off for a stalk—Noonday heat and stillness—An anxious wait—Death of the stag—Wending homewards—A treacherous path—Hidden pitfalls—A sudden shock—Miraculous escape—Happy issue—Visit the "old General"—His camp levee—A yarn after tiffin—"The General" takes a trip north after tiger—A rascally groom—Trapped in a pit of miry clay—Caged with a cobra—A terrible fight for life—Reaction—Breaking of the monsoon—A new danger—Doomed to be drowned like a rat in a hole—Rescue at the eleventh hour—A parting tribute to the glad old days and the gallant and true old comrades—A few parting words—Conclusion.

It is a trite illustration of the workings of the Oriental mind, whenever it is intended to show how different are their ideas from ours, to cite the old story of the native magnate who, on seeing a ball-room for the first time, expressed his astonishment that "the *Sahib logue*" took the trouble to dance themselves, when they could so easily procure hirelings to do the dancing for them. In the pursuit of field sports, the difference is not less marked. For instance, at a "Tent club meet," if any European were deliberately to spear a sow, the achievement, by his fellows, would probably be judged with as much, if not more, severity than a grave infraction of some well-known canon of the moral law. Not so with the native however. If a cultivator, he is content to have one more slain, as that represents to him one enemy to his cr[illegible]

less, and he cares not whether it be a "tusker" or one of the weaker sex. If he is a low-caste camp-follower, sow's flesh is even a more welcome comestible than boar's flesh, and *his* sporting conscience has no qualms. So too we will say with quail-shooting or duck-shooting. The European ideal of the sport is to give the bird something like a fair chance. Only the tyro, or the sordid pot-hunter, would think of such devices as are in the eyes of the native perfectly legitimate and even praiseworthy. The European sportsman will even at times exercise considerable ingenuity to "flush" his birds; to make them "rise," so that he may "take them on the wing." The native *shikaree*, on the contrary, will exhaust every conceivable cunning device to lull his intended quarry into a false security, and then will deliberately "pot" half-a-dozen as they sit, or even steal on them as they sleep, and appropriate them as a "down South nigger" would rob a hen-roost.

In fact, the sporting ideas of the native approach somewhat closely those characteristics that we are wont to associate with the methods of the poacher in the old country. The Oriental scouts the idea of sport altogether, as we hold it. His ideal is to gain his object with the least amount of personal risk and the smallest expenditure of physical effort. So it is that traps, lures, gins, pitfalls, and cunningly devised wiles and snares are more in accord with his ideas of sport than our bolder and more open methods. Thus for instance they will sometimes poison a tank or stream, and for the sake of securing enough fish to serve for one feast, they will destroy that particular source of food supply for a whole village for quite an indefinite period.

Doubtless one explanation is not far to seek, and difference in idiosyncracy is not the only element in the contrast. Naturally, where arms of precision are, or were, until recently, unknown, and where wild beasts are numerous and often offensive, man will set his wits to work to overcome

savage aggression and brute force with the superior cunning which is the heritage of reason. Among all savage tribes, therefore, we find the most ingenious stratagems are resorted to and the most clever contrivances brought into play to secure the spoils of the chase, judging, of course, from the native standpoint.

In the Doddpore jungles, I met with numerous illustrations of this. One of the most common and not the least dangerous of these was the one I am about to describe.

To trap deer, wild hog, or even more dangerous game, the rude forest dwellers adopted the following plan:—

They would usually select a forest path near the edge of the jungle—one of those leading to the cultivated lands in the vicinity, and one most likely from evidences which they are keen to detect, to be most frequented by the animals they wish to kill. In this path, then, they, with much care and skilful contrivance, dig a deep, narrow, well-like pit. These pits are commonly made rather broader at the bottom than at the top; and so far as form is concerned, they present somewhat the appearance of a great sunken lamp chimney. To make the trap more deadly, a single stake, or even a couple of hardwood stakes, with the protruding points hardened by fire, are planted upright in the bottom of the pit.

Over the opening, slight branches or twigs are then cunningly woven, to give an admirable simulation of the natural appearance of an ordinary jungle path; and the whole surrounding area is strewed with a loose layer of leaves, withered grass, and other rubbish natural to the environment.

If the pitfall is meant for tiger or leopard, a decoy goat or calf may be tethered in the vicinity, in such a way as to tempt the unwary depredator along the path and over the dangerous spot. In Assam and some other districts, even elephants and rhinoceros are not unfrequently entrapped and destroyed in such pits.

For the ordinary purpose of the villager, who wants not only to protect his crop but to replenish his larder with venison or wild pork, those pitfalls were quite numerous in the *sal* jungles surrounding Doddpore.

When settlement increases, and herds of cattle begin to take the place of deer and hogs, these pits become of course dangerous, and many an unlucky cow or wandering plough bullock, and sometimes even the great hunter, man himself, falls a victim to their cunningly concealed destructiveness.

My first introduction to one of these horrid holes was nearly making an end of me altogether, and putting a complete finish to my hunting experiences.

I remember the circumstance well; and as it affords a good illustration of the nature of the life we had to lead in these remote wilds, I think the narration may prove interesting, and form a fitting finish to my book.

It was not long after I had taken over charge of the grants from my predecessor, and when as yet I was not familiar with the jungles, and rather sceptical as to their dangers.

One morning I went out, as I had repeatedly done, with my pony and gun, and accompanied by my *syce*, to have a survey of the work going on, and at the same time take a shot at anything in the nature of game that might present itself. The belt of forest was distant, as I have already said, about one mile from the bungalow. I had gone over part of the cultivation, visited a number of workmen that were busy building a masonry well in the village, closely inspected the progress being made by a party of brickmaking contractors who were engaged in the preparation of a great brick-kiln; and at length, having got through most of my work, I was free to indulge my sporting tastes, and very quickly had the cartridges in the gun.

I halted the pony near the edge of the jungle, and having several pea-fowl among the growing barley, I told the

syce to lead the pony along the skirt of the forest, while I entered the underwood myself, knowing from observation and experience that the pea-fowl would make for the forest as the *syce* disturbed them, and that I might expect some good shooting.

This plan of action succeeded just as I had anticipated. The great handsome birds, with their heavy crops, run like hares, and, when gorged with food, it is no easy task to make them rise. With a small rifle they afford pretty shooting as they run, and with swan shot, one can do swift execution if you intercept their escape into the jungle, and see their gorgeous extended plumage spread out before your observant gaze as they soar overhead.

Unless an eye-witness of their flight, no one would imagine with what graceful celerity these great heavy birds can cleave their way through even close forest. It is not nearly such easy shooting as the tyro might think, and a vigorous pea-fowl will take away a lot of lead sometimes, and not after all fall a victim.

I had shot one running bird, and succeeded in bringing to earth with a gladdening dull thud, and a crash as the bodies tore through the bushes, two more very fine-plumaged cocks, which were retrieved by the *syce* and strapped on the pony, when not far ahead of me, to the right of a little open glade, I spied the moving antlers and the sleek hide of a stately spotted deer (*Axis Maculata*). Gazing more intently, I saw moving warily along with him some seven or eight dainty hinds and fawns—a complete harem and family, in fact; and at once forgetful of the pea-fowl, and intent on securing what seemed to be a good head of horns, I struck off on the trail, the wind in my favour, and was soon out of sight and hearing of my *syce*, and deep in the gloom of the forest.

I made a pretty wide *détour* to still further better vantage ground, and stalked cautiously but quic

occasionally hearing some slight indication ahead that convinced me I was on the right track, but that the deer were on the move, and evidently in a suspicious mood.

The sun was now mounting high, and presently I came to an oval open space—one of those frequently recurring grassy glades which are, during the rainy season, full of water and become the haunt of aquatic birds, but which was now quite dry, and rustling high with wavy grass. By stooping down, I could just keep my body hidden among the clumps of elephant grass and *nurkul* (the succulent reeds that the elephants and buffaloes love).

Dodging rapidly and noiselessly in and out among the apertures between these clumps, I gained the further side of the glade; and creeping up the slight incline, I lay down behind a prostrate tree, and waited patiently to see if there was any chance of the deer coming in my direction. I had not long to wait—perhaps about twenty minutes. It was now getting hotter and hotter, as the sun mounted higher above the tree tops. The breathless, oppressive heat began to shimmer and palpitate over all the forest. The cicadas' shrill chorus alone broke the brooding stillness. I knew the deer, having been once disturbed, would seek the more secluded depths of the forest that lay behind me.

Presently I hear a rustle. That nameless intuition which every hunter knows, warned me that my game was afoot and near me. The "shrilling" of the grasshoppers sometimes stops suddenly. There is a pause. A silence that may almost be felt, and then some faint crackle or rustle reaches the expectant ear, and you feel it is time to look along the barrels and see that the trigger is ready.

Peering eagerly through my leafy screen, I now see a noble old buck showing his antlered head from the opposite range of bushes. The scrutiny was keen, searching, and prolonged, but it was evidently considered satisfactory, for now his well-proportioned front and glossy spotted body emerged boldly

into the comparatively clear space. After him came trippingly and daintily three graceful fawns and a couple of does. I thought there were others moving in the bushes behind these; but the old buck was now well within range of my No. 12, and pulling the trigger, I had the satisfaction of putting a bullet right through his neck, and seeing him turn and topple over. Hurrying forward, I was able to put another through his heart as he struggled to his feet attempting to escape, and that settled him.

Phew! it *was* hot. There was not a breath of air now stirring. One of these sudden lulls that mark the approach of high meridian, had succeeded the faint, languorous breeze of morn, and away out of the shade, the direct rays of the sun came scorchingly down, and made their power very decidedly felt. The buck had a fine head, and I congratulated myself on my acquisition, and then thinking that perhaps my *syce* might possibly be within hail of a "coo-ee," I "*coo-eed*" loudly and in most approved Australian fashion, sending the clear echoing cry ringing down the vaulted arcades of the Indian forest. That's the proper way to put it, isn't it?

I kept this up for some little time; but getting no response, I came to the conclusion that I must, in the excitement of the stalk, have miscalculated the distance I had come, and that I must have penetrated farther into the forest than I had fancied. I had not been long in charge of these estates, and was not very well acquainted with the jungles, but I knew the general direction I had come. Doing what was necessary, therefore, with my hunting knife to prevent the venison from acquiring a rapid taint, I dragged the carcase into the shade, cut down a sapling, and tying my handkerchief to it, stuck it in the ground beside my quarry, and shouldering my gun, off I set in quest of my lagging *syce* and pony.

I knew I must keep the sun in my face, so off I plough through the undergrowth, and after a little progress, I lu as I thought, struck a pretty well-worn cattle trac

seemed to me, and which led in the direction I wished to pursue. I mentally thanked my stars for their friendly guidance, and onwards I strode with quickened step, feeling quite elated at my good morning's sport, and picturing to myself the nice cool bath I would have when I got back to the bungalow.

I knew I must now be nearing the confines of the forest, for there was a lighter appearance on ahead; and, indeed, presently I could see the heaped-up barricade of prickly bushes laid by the natives along the border of their green fields, all along the edge of the jungle, as some defence against the incursions of the deer and other animals. Just here I diverged from the path along a narrow green alley which seemed to be a feeder to the main path, and looked as if it led to a gap in the prickly fence, so I quickened my pace and hastened along, rejoiced to think I was about to quit the jungle.

All of a sudden, without a moment's warning, I felt as if the ground had receded right away from under my feet. I had the sensation one has when he fancies he has come to the bottom of a stair or ladder in the dark, and instead of firm ground, he treads wildly out into space. My body was violently thrown forward. My gun, which I was carrying in my right hand in front of me, to break and clear the cobwebs from the bushes, was jerked out of my grasp, and fell in front with an ominous smash, and exploded as it fell. I had not an instant to steady myself, or to make any distinct endeavour to save myself from falling. Yet, quick as thought, by a swift instinct I grasped the situation, and intuitively knew I must have gone through one of those concealed pitfalls I have spoken of.

In sudden emergencies the mind acts quickly. A jungle life such as I have endeavoured to describe, amid constant adventures with wild animals, and all the changing exigencies of dealing with both wild beasts and cunning men,

develops a quick-wittedness and promptitude of action in dangerous straits; and rapid as an electric shock, there darted through my mind the fear that there might be a pointed stake in the pit, and that I might be horribly impaled and possibly killed.

I drew my feet together. I set my teeth. A muttered prayer flashed across my lips. There was a crackling of dry twigs, a cloud of dust, withered leaves, and insects, a swift descent, and sudden darkness. As I fell, my face struck on the jagged end of a branch, and ripped a portion of the skin off my cheek. But beyond that and a few trifling abrasions on my knees and elbows, I found, when I had a moment to realise my position, that I had escaped almost as by a miracle from a frightful and sudden death, or at least from a horrible mutilation.

Of course you have guessed what it was. I found myself at the bottom of one of these pitfalls I have described; and I shuddered as I contemplated the awfully narrow escape I had so providentially experienced. There were two stakes —hard, fire-burnt, pointed stakes—planted upright in the pit, and by a merciful interposition, I had fallen or slid right between the two. It was about as close a "shave" as could well be imagined. One of the stakes had actually grazed my back and torn my shirt; while the other in front was but a few inches from my chin. I felt a cold sweat come out all over my body as I realised how narrow had been my escape from a cruel mutilation or death.

The cold stage did not last long, however. It was insufferably close and hot down in that noisome hole. I felt like a caged rat. I could scarce wriggle free of the stakes, and the inwards-inclining wall of the odious trap in which I found myself, precluded all possible chance of escape unaided. I daresay I could eventually, with some hard work and difficulty, have got out, for I had my good hunting knife with me, and I could have cut holes in the

the pit; but very luckily for me, as it happened, my lazy wretch of a *syce* was close by, taking it *coolly* under the welcome shade of a peepul tree, and when my gun went off as I popped into the hole, he was roused into curiosity to see what I had shot, and came towards the spot. Of course he soon divined what had occurred, and unbuckling the pony's reins and stirrup-leathers, he gave me very welcome assistance in extricating myself from my unwelcome and involuntary quarters.

When he saw the deadly peril I had so miraculously escaped, his wonder was as great as mine, though his acknowledgments were considerably more noisy. For days and weeks afterwards the *syce* could speak of nothing else; and used to pile curse upon curse on the head or heads of the unknown digger or diggers of that never-to-be-sufficiently objurgated deer pit.

For my own part, I was all right again in a few days; but I never came across one of these dangerous holes in the vicinity of my villages without issuing at once a peremptory order for the villagers to fill them up, and this was done.

In point of fact, very few animals are ever deceived by these pitfalls, and as I have shown, and shall now still further show, they are a very real source of danger to either men or cattle who may be unaware of their locality, and are unlucky enough to stumble across them as I did.

My nearest neighbour in the same jungly district, to whom I have already referred as "the General," was the hero of the episode I am now about to tell. "The General" had been all through the Mutiny, and was one of the fortunate fugitives who escaped from the Sitapore district. He had many a thrilling tale to tell of those dreadful days, and on more than one occasion his escapes from death had been all but incredible. For many years he had lived the life of a recluse on his "grants" near Doddpore, [illegible] never forget the cordial welcome he gave me

when I first called on him after I had taken charge of my new sphere of labour. I had heard strange stories of his morose disposition, and was prepared to meet a sort of modern Timon of Athens; but you may judge of my surprise when, after a few minutes' conversation, I found he hailed from bonnie Forfarshire; and there and then began a friendship which ripened into the most brotherly and entire unanimity of feeling. He and I were the only two non-official Europeans in the district. Our estates were contiguous for many miles, and as his bungalow was only some five miles from my headquarters, we had many opportunities of seeing each other.

He was a man of very powerful frame. He was a master of the languages of India. There was not a turn or phase of native character and thought with which he was not familiar, and he was universally respected and loved by his own wild forest people, among whom he had lived so long; although many of the neighbouring land owners had frequently been worsted by him in land disputes and territorial feuds.

Two or three days after my pitfall adventure, I rode over to "Bun Budailee," one of his outlying villages, where he had pitched his tent while superintending the harvesting of some of his crops in a clearing he had made in that remote village.

I found "the General" in his *pyjamas* and *banian*, smoking his hookah and surrounded by a motley group of villagers listening to the wild and not unpleasing twanging of a *sitar* played by a wandering bard and accompanied by the brattle and din of two or three tom-toms, one of which was being vigorously thumbed and rattled by no less a personage than "the General" himself. (He was quite an adept in the musical art as practised by the natives, and there was scarcely a native instrument he had not mastered, while the native songs he could sing were simply "legion.")

After tiffin, when the crowd had gone, we laid do

the tent, and "the General," slowly puffing the smoke from his hookah, with a far-off, dreamy look in his big brown eyes, asked me—

"Did you never hear of my narrow escape from death in one of those pits?"

"No! you never told me anything about it. How was it?"

"Man! it's a queer story. Ugh! the very thought of it makes me shiver."

I settled myself to listen, and "the General" proceeded.

"It's now, let me see, six years ago; and I had gone up near to the banks of the Sardah to have a short spell, for I had been hard at work clearing, and had just got over a long quarrel with one of my neighbouring *maliks* (*i.e.* land proprietors), so as I heard there were 'tiger' up on the other side of the Sardah, I determined to take a run up, by way of change, before the rains set in."

"What time of the year was it?" I asked.

"It was just before the breaking of the monsoons. They were late that year, I remember, and it was awfully hot down here, and most of my 'fellows' were down with fever. It must have been about the first week in June." (I can scarcely do justice to the vigour of the General's narration, but will try as nearly as possible to reproduce his exact words.)

"Well, I arrived at my camp all right, turned in, and next day started out on foot, as I had news of Sambur close by, and I wanted a 'skin.' 'Tiger' were reported on the other side of the river, but none had been for a long time seen near Palimpore, the village where my tents were now pitched.

"I took with me a blackguard of a *syce* that I had recently got on trial from Sitapore, and I had that morning given him a severe but well deserved thrashing, because I found he had been stealing the old mare's grain and selling it. In fact to tell you the truth, I was afraid he would 'bolt' if

I did not keep an eye on him, and so instead of taking Baeka, my old peon, I left him in charge of the camp and took this *syce* with me.

"We wandered about through the jungle for some time, when at length we came on signs of sambur. The jungle was very dense, and though there had been months of almost constant drought, the ground here was quite moist. I was hurrying along a slight track, when, bang all at once, down I went into one of these concealed pits just much in the same manner as you say you fell. The *syce* was close behind me, and in falling I yelled out to him, '*Kubberdar*!' and probably saved him from the same fate that had overtaken myself. You will see how the '*Salah*' requited my friendly warning.

"But now comes the curious part of the affair. I went plop! straight down into a deep, dismal hole, and at the bottom landed right up to my waist in a deposit of tenacious clayey mud. Regular '*pank*' it was. In fact, when I tried to struggle and free myself I found I was held as firm as if I had been birdlimed. I had been wearing riding boots rather tight for me, and struggle as I might, I found I was 'properly planted,' and utterly powerless to free myself Indeed, the more I struggled the firmer I seemed to get stuck, so never doubting but that with the assistance of my *syce*, I would get out all right, I called to him; and for the first time with a feeling akin to dismay, I discovered that there was no response. The truth was that the *syce*, after seeing, as he thought, that I had dropped in for a permanent 'billet,' had seized the opportunity and made straight back for the tent.

"I found out afterwards that he went back, and told Baeka and my other servants that I had met another *sahib*, the deputy collector, who was also out hunting, and that I had gone to his camp, and was to spend the night there. He said I had ordered him to take the mare across, and

Baeka was to give him 10 rupees to take to me. The story was so probable, that my man believed him readily; and to get quit of that character in my tale at once, I may say that he got clean off with the 10 rupees, and I never saw him again from that day to this. The mare, he must have ridden to Mohumdee, for the Thannadar (*i.e.*, police inspector) there found her near the police station, and she was afterwards returned to me at the 'grant.'

"However, to return to my prison pit. Here I was, like a second Joseph, buried up to my waist in a stiff, unyielding clay, left all alone in the middle of a pathless jungle, and utterly unable to lift my legs one inch out of the horrible miry trap into which I had fallen.

"When I had nearly bawled myself hoarse shouting for the *syce*, the conviction forced itself on my mind that he had really deserted me, and I must confess I began to be seriously alarmed. An examination of the pit showed me that it must have formerly been a 'kutcha well.' (A *kutcha* well, I may note for the reader's edification, is one merely dug down for a temporary supply of water, and as distinguished from a *pucca* or masonry well.)

"Or possibly it may have been dug by 'Koomhars' (the potter caste) on account of the plastic brick clay of which the bottom and sides were composed; but it had evidently been long disused, for great flakes had fallen from the sides and there were cracks and rents and fissures all around, owing to the subsidence of the lower strata, and these had settled into the tenacious quagmire at the bottom, in which I was now as firmly embedded as if I had grown there.

"I shuddered as I noted the dismal surroundings. There were several great gaunt-looking, yellowish-green frogs, peering at me with curious eyes; and then as I turned my head around a little, I made a discovery that made my very heart cease beating for a minute, and sent every drop of blood in my body bounding back in my veins. There, right

on a level with my face, its length half concealed in a crevice in the crumbling sides of the pit, its hood half expanded, its forked tongue quivering as it jerked it out and in, and its eyes glittering with a baleful glare, I saw a great cobra."

"By Jove!" I exclaimed, "that was no joke." "The General" proceeded:—

"It was evidently half afraid, half angry, and did not know what to make of me. I could see it was a prisoner like myself, and it had most probably been lured into the pit by hearing the croaking of the frogs, and in endeavouring to reach them it must have fallen in."

"You must have been frightened, General?" I exclaimed.

"Frightened? I tell you, man, I felt my heart for the moment cease beating. You know I am not a coward, but I was petrified almost with the dread of my luckless position. I could not say but what the brute might at any moment make a dart at me. I felt utterly helpless and despairing, and for a moment my heart whispered to me that my end had come. Then came a sort of nervous recklessness. I suppose it was 'the fury of despair' we read about. I know I uttered a savage curse, and, snatching my hard helmet, I hit the brute a smashing blow in the face, and then began a fight for life.

"It was a big powerful snake. The blow had only maddened it. Its hood expanded, its hissing filled the pit, and swaying and rearing its clammy length, it launched full at my face. My gun was lying choked up with dirt and half buried in the 'pank,' but I had my hunting-knife with me, and while I parried the fierce darts of the infuriated brute with my helmet, I made quick stabs and slashes at it whenever I could get a chance, and after a short, exciting struggle it succumbed, and tried to withdraw behind the crevice, but with a slice of my knife I nearly severed its head from its body. And then for awhile—you may laugh at me or not as you will—all was a blank. I must have fainted.

"When I came to myself, I felt still faint and weak, and a feeling of utter prostration and despair crept over me. It must have been some hours now since I had fallen into the hole. Still I hoped that perhaps the *syce* had gone for help, and I tried to buoy myself up with the idea that, even if he had deserted me, Baeka would miss me after a time and come in search of me.

"The weary hours dragged along. It was intensely still and sultry above, I conjectured, for even in the deep dank pit the air was stifling and oppressive, and I could not detect a sound or rustle in the vegetation that overhung the mouth of my living tomb.

"Oh, man," said the General, here becoming quite pathetic, "it was an awful weary wait.

"Hour after hour passed on. Again and again I tried to drag myself free, but I only exhausted myself in fruitless struggles."

(To those who know what Indian "*pank*" is, the General's woful plight will be easily understood. In Mofussil parlance to be "*pank lugged*" [*Anglice,* bogged] in this tenacious clayey mud is one of the most justly dreaded mishaps that can befall the traveller. Many a horse has been ruined in the attempt to flounder out of a quagmire of this description. They strain their sinews past remedy, and, indeed, in many instances I have known even cattle and tame buffaloes unable to struggle out until help has arrived.)

My friend continued:

"I could now see that the day was waning. The heat had become if possible still more sultry and intense, and once or twice I had fancied I heard a low muttering rumbling sound as if of distant thunder. As the daylight grew fainter and fainter this rumbling increased, and then short sudden flashes began to play overhead, lasting only a second, and at length became totally dark, and then the flashes increased in [illegible]cy and frequency, and soon the conviction forced

itself on me that this was the beginning of the rains. The monsoon was breaking. The drought was at an end. The clouds were hurrying up in tremendous solid masses, and soon a big drop or two of rain began to come hurtling through the overhanging grass, and another dread began to take possession of my mind. I knew what was coming.

"Ere long the expected event happened. The roar and crashing of the thunder increased in intensity. The lightning seemed to roll along the heavens in continuous jets, and circles, and bands of fire. I could *smell* the rain, and then the floodgates of heaven were opened, and down it came in one continuous sheet of water, and the thirsty earth licked it up."

I could see the whole picture in my mind's eye, and did not need the General's vivid narration to realise what had happened. It was this:—

The young cracks in the rice fields lap greedily of the life-giving element. A diapason of sounds from myriads of yellow frogs fills the air. The rain comes down in a blinding hurtling steady rush. Soon the runlets and depressions in the ground fill with a turbid eddying stream, in which leaves, drowned crickets and grasshoppers, knots of ants, reptiles, and all the flotsam of the forest, whirl and rise and sink and eddy and float along. "And now," pursued the General, resuming his narrative, "from a hundred tiny crevices and gaps in the edge of my pit the troubled turbid rain-water began to trickle down, crumbling the clay away, and I was soon drenched to the skin, and felt with alarm the water beginning slowly but surely to mount up the sides of the pit.

"I thought then it was all up with me. I can hardly describe to you my thoughts. I know I thought of home. I reviewed my past life. I made desperate struggles again and again to free myself. I shouted and screamed for h[illegible] I believe I prayed and swore. In fact, for the time I [illegible] I must have gone demented, but I found myse[illegible]

powerless. The miry clay and treacherous *pank* held me firm, and then again I must have relapsed into unconsciousness.

"When I came to myself it was barely light, it was still raining heavily and stolidly, the big drops plashed down; I could see a dull leaden sky above, and I knew the *nullahs* and water courses would soon be full. The battle of the elements had ceased, and but for the continuous crash of falling rain, all was still. The water in the pit was nearly up to my shoulders. I felt I was doomed to die, and a sort of sullen, despairing stupor took possession of me. I had now given up all hope, when, hark! I thought I heard the sound of a human voice!

"With all the agony of despair I raised a cry for help. There was an awful pause, and then I heard my faithful Baeka crying in response. Again I cried out, and I soon saw his dear old wrinkled face peering down at me from the edge of the pit.

"Man, Maori!!" said the poor General, "the revulsion of feeling was nearly making me *behosh* again" (*behosh, i.e.*, without breath or life).

"Well, I needn't pile on the agony. Baeka had passed a miserable night. His misgivings were aroused when the storm broke. The head man of the village had been into the camp, and told him there was no other *sahib* out in the jungles for miles and miles around, nor had been for months; so, before dawn, the faithful old fellow had roused the camp; he got the *chowkeydars* of the nearest villages to turn out, with many of the *guallahs* or cowherds, and through the rain, they set out in quest of me, and knowing the general direction I had taken, they providentially arrived just in the nick of time for my salvation."

"Well, how did they manage to get you out?" I asked.

"Oh, that was not so easy, but they managed it; some of them cut down saplings and managed to make a sort of ladder,

and Baeka came down with a long *lathee*, and loosened the *pank* round my body sufficiently for me to do the rest myself. Then they tied their *puggrees* and *kummerbunds* together, and I knotted these round my waist, and under my armpits, and with that help, they tugging away at the free ends, I managed to clamber out. But, oh man! I was awfully done! I could scarcely stand, and trembled like a baby; in fact, they had to make a litter and carry me to the tent."

"Poor old General! It was indeed a providential deliverance. And how did you get home?"

"Oh, I got the loan of an elephant from one of the neighbouring *mallik*s and got home right enough, but for weeks I was ill with rheumatic fever; and, indeed, old man, I doubt if ever I will cease to feel the effects of that twenty-four hours in a living grave. When I fell in, it must have been about 8 or 9 in the morning, and it was about that time next day when Baeka found me, and I was at length extricated"

Such was the tale my old chum told me in the shadow of the tent, while the hot breath of high noon brooded over the silent forest without, and the parched air quivered over the tree-tops.

And now, dear reader, I must for a time again—perchance for ever—close my records and reminiscences of the dear old "Tent Life in Tigerland."

Ah! the glad days that will never come back! How many of the faithful gallant spirits, that were so kindly and true, now rest quietly in the far-off Eastern land. The ranks are thinning fast now; but still from time to time I hear a pleasant note of the old seductive Eastern strain.

For instance, some years ago, dear "Old Mac" and "Jamie" came down to see me in my Australian home; and we *did* have such a jolly yet sad talk over old time and vanished friends.

"The General," like myself, fell a victim to the sa[illegible] insidious, fever-laden climate, but is now, at last a[illegible]

fairly prosperous settler in Texas, and, *mirabile dictu*, has become a Benedict.

"Pat Hudson" and "Butty" still survive, and mellow with the advancing years. Such natures, such examples are a perennial fount of all good influences; and while old fogeys like myself look back on our intercourse together with grateful loving recollection, the younger and more ardent generation who now live "the Tent Life in the old Tigerland" look up to them with affection and esteem, and learn many a lesson in the ethics of true manly sport from these fine gallant fellows, with whom I spent so many happy days in the "auld lang syne."

Yes, my task is done!

It has been a pleasant one to me, and I hope not altogether an uninteresting one to you.

I have tried to show you one phase of the sturdy Anglo-Saxon colonising life, as for twelve stirring years I lived it. Try to think, lads, of your brother Britons in the sweltering plains, or the tiger-haunted jungles of regal Hindostan, with a little more interest, a little more liking, a little more federal regard, than you have hitherto done.

Try to realise that the same promptings, the same honourable ambitions, the same chivalrous traditions of manly honest sport must actuate YOU, if you are to be loved and honoured and esteemed by YOUR fellows; and whether my words greet you on the Scottish or Irish moors, or in the shires of merry England and ancient Wales; amid the snows and fir forests of Canada, or over the thorny arid plains of Africa; on the bracken-covered slopes of New Zealand, or through the trackless gum forests of Australia; or over the dry plains of the vast interior of that sunny land of promise—wherever, in short, throughout the realm of British Empire you pursue your work, or engage in your [illegible], let the honourable instincts of true English gentle-[illegible]tuate you; and let the grand old country ever have

reason to be proud of her scattered sons; as they hand down her illustrious traditions untarnished by degeneracy; her ancient honour unsullied by a sordid stain; and her peerless pre-eminence unweakened by dividing jealousies or unworthy rivalries.

So MOTE IT BE!

CHAPTER XXI.

A CHAPTER ON GUNS.

On guns—How to cure skins—Different recipes—Conclusion.

My remarks on guns shall be brief. The true sportsman has many facilities for acquiring the best information on a choice of weapons. For large game perhaps nothing can equal the Express rifle. My own trusty weapon was a ·500 bore, very plain, with a pistol grip, point-blank up to 180 yards, made by Murcott of the Haymarket, from whom I have bought over twenty guns, every one of which turned out a splendid weapon.

My next favourite was a No. 12 breechloader, very light, but strong and carefully finished. It had a side snap action with rebounding locks, and was the quickest gun to fire and reload I ever possessed. I bought it from the same maker, although it was manufactured by W. W. Greener.

Avoid a cheap gun as you would a cheap-Jack pedlar. A good name is above riches so far as a gun is concerned, and when you have a good gun take as much care of it as you would of a good wife. They are both equally rare. An expensive gun is not necessarily a good one, but a cheap gun is very seldom trustworthy. Have a portable, handy black leather case. Keep your gun always clean, bright, and free from rust. After every day's shooting see that the barrels and locks are carefully cleaned and oiled. Nothing is better for this purpose than Rangoon oil.

In preserving horns, a little scraping and varnishing are

all that is required. While in camp it is a good plan to rub them with deer, or pig, or tiger fat, as it keeps them from cracking.

To clean a tiger's or other skull. If there be a nest of ants near the camp, place the skull in their immediate vicinity. Some recommend putting in water till the particles of flesh rot, or till the skull is cleared by the fishes. A strong solution of caustic water may be used if you wish to get the bones cleaned very quickly. Some put the skulls in quicklime, but it has a tendency to make the bones splinter, and it is difficult to keep the teeth from getting loose and dropping out. The best but slowest plan is to fix them in mechanically by wire or white lead. A good preservative is to wash or paint them with a very strong solution of fine lime and water.

To cure skins. I know no better recipe than the one adopted by my trainers in the art of *shikar*, the brothers S. I cannot do better than give a description of the process in the words of George himself.

"Skin the animal in the usual way. Cut from the corner of the mouth, down the throat, and along the belly. A white stripe or border generally runs along the belly. This should be left as nearly as possible equal on both sides. Carefully cut the fleshy parts off the lips and balls of the toes and feet. Clean away every particle of fatty or fleshy matter that may still adhere to the skin. Peg it out on the ground with the hair side undermost. When thoroughly scraped clean of all extraneous matter on the inner surface, get a bucket or tub of buttermilk, which is called by the natives *dahye* or *mutha*. It is a favourite article of diet with them, cheap and plentiful. Dip the skin in this, and keep it well and entirely submerged by placing some heavy weight on it. It should be submerged fully three inches in the tub of buttermilk.

"After two days in the milk bath, take it out and

as before. Now take a smooth oval rubbing-board about twelve inches long, five round, and about an inch thick in the middle, and scrub the skin heartily with this instrument. On its lower surface it should be cut in grooves, semicircular in shape, half an inch wide, and one inch apart. During scrubbing use plenty of pure water to remove filth. In about half-an-hour the pinkish-white colour will disappear, and the skin will appear white, with a blackish tinge underneath. This is the true hide.

"Again submerge in the buttermilk bath for twenty-four hours, and get a man to tread on it in every possible way, folding it and unfolding it, till all has been thoroughly worked.

"Take it out again, peg out and scrub it as before, after which wash the whole hide well in clear water. Never mind if the skin looks rotten, it is really not so.

"When washed put it into a tub, in which you have first placed a mixture consisting of half an ounce of alum to each gallon of water. Soak the skin in this mixture for about six hours, taking it up occasionally to drain a little. This is sufficient to cure your skin and clean it."

The tanning remains to be done.

"Get four pounds of babool, tamarind, or dry oak bark. (The babool is a kind of acacia, and is easily procurable, as the tamarind also is.) Boil the bark in two gallons of water till it is reduced to one-half the quantity. Add to this nine gallons of fresh water, and in this solution souse the skin for two, or three, or four days.

"The hairs having been set by the soaking in alum, the skin will tan more quickly, and if the tan is occasionally rubbed into the pores of the skin it will be an improvement. You can tell when the tanning is complete by the colour the skin assumes. When this satisfies the eye, take it out and dry on a rod. When nearly dry it should be curried with oil or clarified butter if required for wear, but if only

for floor covering or carriage rug, the English curriers' common "dubbin," sold by shopkeepers, is best. This operation, which must be done on the inner side only, is simple.

"Another simple recipe, and one which answers well, is this. Mix together of the best English soap, four ounces; arsenic, two and a half grains; camphor, two ounces; alum, half an ounce; saltpetre, half an ounce. Boil the whole, and keep stirring, in a half-pint of distilled water, over a very slow fire, for from ten to fifteen minutes. Apply when cool with a sponge. A little sweet oil may be rubbed on the skins after they are dry.

"Another good method is to apply arsenical soap, which may be made as follows:—powdered arsenic, two pounds; camphor, five ounces; white soap, sliced thin, two pounds; salt of tartar, twelve drams; chalk, or powdered fine lime, four ounces; add a small quantity of water first to the soap, put over a gentle fire, and keep stirring. When melted, add the lime and tartar, and thoroughly mix; next add the arsenic, keeping up a constant motion, and lastly the camphor. The camphor should first be reduced to a powder by means of a little spirits of wine, and should be added to the mess after it has been taken off the fire.

"This preparation must be kept in a well-stoppered jar, or properly closed pot. When ready, the soap should be of the consistency of Devonshire cream. To use, add water till it becomes of the consistency of clear rich soup."

I have now finished my book. It has been pleasant to me to write down these recollections. Ever since I began my task, death has been busy, and the ranks of my old friends have been sadly thinned. Failing health had driven me from my old shooting grounds, and in sunny Australia I have been successful in recruiting the energies enervated by the burning climate of India. Australia has become in

a second Fatherland to me, and amid the busy whirl of commerce, and the battle of politics, I still find room for the exercise of the old hunting ardour, and sometimes have occasion, alas! like the old apostle, to war with wild beasts, and so I find that I have not lost all my old nerve and sporting zeal. I have achieved high honour and distinction in my adopted country, and its interests demand my best and highest service. That my dear old planter friends may have as kindly recollections of the "Maori" as he has of them, is what I ardently hope; that I may yet share in the sports, pastimes, joys, and social delights of Mofussil life in India, is a cherished wish, which a visit may one day gratify. If this volume meets the approbation of the public, I may be tempted to draw further on a well stocked memory, and gossip afresh on Indian life, Indian experiences, and Indian sport. Meantime, courteous reader, farewell.

SPORT AND WORK

ON THE

NEPAUL FRONTIER

OR

TWELVE YEARS' SPORTING REMINISCENCES
OF AN INDIGO PLANTER

By "MAORI"

SPORT AND WORK

ON

THE NEPAUL FRONTIER.

CHAPTER I.

Province of Behar—Boundaries—General description—District of Chumparun—Mooteeharree—The town and lake—Native houses—The Planters' Club—Segoulie.

AMONG the many beautiful and fertile provinces of India, none can, I think, much excel that of Behar for richness of soil, diversity of race, beauty of scenery, and the energy and intelligence of its inhabitants. Stretching from the Nepaul Hills to the far distant plains of Gya, with the Gunduck, Bagmuttee and other noble streams watering its rich bosom, and swelling with their tribute the stately Ganges, it includes within its borders every variety of soil and climate; and its various races, with their strange costumes, creeds, and customs, might afford material to fill volumes.

The northern part of this splendid province follows the Nepaulese boundary from the district of Goruckpore on the north, to that of Purneah on the south. In the forests and jungles along this boundary line live many strange tribes, whose customs, nay even their names and language, are all but unknown to the English public. Strange wild animals dispute with these aborigines the possession of the gloomy jungle solitudes. Great trees of wondrous dimensions and strange foliage rear their stately heads to heaven, and

matted and entwined together by creepers of huge size and tenacious hold.

To the south and east vast billows of golden grain roll in successive undulations to the mighty Ganges, the sacred stream of the Hindoos. Innumerable villages, nestling amid groves of plantains and feathery rustling bamboos, send up their wreaths of pale grey smoke into the still warm air. At frequent intervals the steely blue of some lovely lake, where thousands of water-fowl disport themselves, reflects from its polished surface the sheen of the noonday sun. Great masses of mango wood show a sombre outline at intervals, and here and there the towering chimney of an indigo factory pierces the sky. Government roads and embankments intersect the face of the country in all directions, and vast sheets of the indigo plant refresh the eye with their plains of living green, forming a grateful contrast to the hard, dried, sun-baked surface of the stubble fields, where the rice crop has rustled in the breezes of the past season. In one of the loveliest and most fertile districts of this vast province, namely Chumparun, I began my experiences as an indigo planter.

Chumparun, with its subdistrict of Bettiah, lies to the north of Tirhoot, and is bounded all along its northern extent by the Nepaul hills and forests. When I joined my appointment as assistant on one of the large local indigo concerns, there were not more than about thirty European residents altogether in the district. The chief town, Mooteeharree, consisted of a long *bazaar*, or market street, beautifully situated on the bank of a lovely lake, some two miles in length. From the main street, with its quaint little shops sheltered from the sun by makeshift verandahs of tattered sacking, weather-stained shingles, or rotting bamboo mats, various little lanes and alleys diverged, leading one into a collection of tumble-down and ruinous huts, set up apparently by chance, and presenting the most incongruous appearance that could possibly be conceived. One or two

pucca houses, that is, houses of brick and masonry, showed where some wealthy Bunneah (trader) or usurious banker lived, but the majority of the houses were of the usual mud and bamboo order. There is a small thatched hut where the meals are cooked, and where the owner and his family could sleep during the rains. Another smaller hut, at right angles to this, gives shelter to the family goat, or, if they are rich enough to keep one, the cow. All round the villages in India there are generally large patches of common, where the village cows have free rights of pasture; and all who can, keep either a cow or a couple of goats, the milk from which forms a welcome addition to their usual scanty fare. In this second hut also is stored as much fuel, consisting of dried cow-dung, straw, maize-stalks, leaves, etc., as can be collected; and a ragged fence of bamboo or *rahur** stalks encloses the two unprotected sides, thus forming a small court, quadrangle, or square inside. This court is the native's *sanctum sanctorum*. It is kept scrupulously clean, being swept and garnished religiously every day. In this the women prepare the rice for the day's consumption; here they cut up and clean their vegetables, or their fish, when the adjacent lake has been dragged by the village fishermen. Here the produce of their little garden, capsicums, Indian corn, onions or potatoes—perchance turmeric, ginger, or other roots or spices—are dried and made ready for storing in the earthen sun-baked repository for the reception of such produce appertaining to each household. Here the children play, and are washed and tended. Here the maiden combs out her long black hair, or decorates her bronzed visage with streaks of red paint down the nose, and a little antimony on the eyelids, or myrtle juice on the finger and toe nails. Here, too, the matron, or

* The *rahur* is a kind of pea, growing not unlike our English broom in appearance; it is sown with the maize crop during the rains, and garnered in the cold weather. It produces a small pea, which is largely used by the natives, and forms the nutritive article of diet known as *dhall*.

the withered old crone of a grandmother, spins her cotton thread; or, in the old scriptural hand-mill, grinds the corn for the family flour and meal; and the father and the young men (when the sun is high and hot in the heavens) take their noonday *siesta*, or, the day's labours over, cower round the smoking fire of a cold winter night, and discuss the prices ruling in the bazaar, the rise of rents, or the last village scandal.

In the middle of the town, and surrounded by a spacious fenced-in compound, which sloped gently to the lake, stood the Planters' Club, a large low roofed bungalow, with a roomy wide verandah in front. Here we met, when business or pleasure brought us to "the Station." Here were held our annual balls, or an occasional public dinner-party. To the north of the Club stood a long range of barrack-looking buildings, which were the opium godowns, where the opium was collected and stored during the season. Facing this again, and at the extremity of the lake, was the district jail, where all the rascals of the surrounding country were confined; its high walls topped at intervals by a red puggree and flashing bayonet wherever a jail sepoy kept his "lonely watch." Near it, sheltered in a grove of shady trees, were the court houses, where the collector and magistrate daily dispensed justice, or where the native *moonsiff* disentangled knotty points of law. Here, too, came the sessions judge once a month or so, to try criminal cases and mête out justice to the law-breakers.

We had thus a small European element in our "Station," consisting of our magistrate and collector, whose large and handsome house was built on the banks of another and yet lovelier lake, which joined the town lake by a narrow stream or strait at its southern end, an opium agent, a district superintendent of police, and last but not least, a doctor. These formed the official population of our little "Station." There was also a nice little church, but no resident pastor,

and behind the town lay a quiet churchyard, rich in the dust of many a pioneer, who, far from home and friends, had here been gathered to his silent rest.

About twelve miles to the north, and near the Nepaul boundary, was the small military station of Segoulie. Here there was always a native cavalry regiment, the officers of which were frequent and welcome guests at the factories in the district, and were always glad to see their indigo friends at their mess in cantonments. At Bettiah, still further to the north, was a rich rajah's palace, where a resident European manager dwelt, and had for his sole society an assistant magistrate who transacted the executive and judicial work of the subdistrict. These, with some twenty-five or thirty indigo managers and assistants, composed the whole European population of Chumparun.

Never was there a more united community. We were all like brothers. Each knew all the rest. The assistants frequently visited each other, and the managers were kind and considerate to their subordinates. Hunting parties were common, cricket and hockey matches were frequent, and in the cold weather, which is our slackest season, fun, frolic, and sport was the order of the day. We had an annual race meet, when all the crack horses of the district met in keen rivalry to test their pace and endurance. During this high carnival, we lived for the most part under canvas, and had friends from far and near to share our hospitality. In a future chapter I must describe our racing meet.

CHAPTER II.

My first charge—How we get our lands—Our home farm—System of farming—Collection of rents—The planter's duties.

My first charge was a small outwork of the large factory Seeraha. It was called Puttihee. There was no bungalow; that is, there was no regular house for the assistant, but a little one-roomed hut, built on the top of the indigo vats, served me for a residence. It had neither doors nor windows, and the rain used to beat through the room, while the eaves were inhabited by countless swarms of bats, who in the evening flashed backwards and forwards in ghostly rapid flight, and were a most intolerable nuisance. To give some idea of the duties of an indigo assistant, I must explain the system on which we get our lands, and how we grow our crop.

Water of course being a *sine qua non*, the first object in selecting a site for a factory is, to have water in plenty, contiguous to the proposed buildings. Consequently Puttihee was built on the banks of a very pretty lake, shaped like a horseshoe, and covered with water lilies and broad-leaved green aquatic plants. The lake was kept by the native proprietor as a fish preserve, and literally teemed with fish of all sorts, shapes, and sizes. I had not been long at Puttihee before I had erected a staging, leading out into deep water, and many a happy hour I have spent there with my three or four rods out, pulling in the finny inhabitants.

Having got water and a site, the next thing is to get land which to grow your crop. By purchase, by getting a long

lease, or otherwise, you become possessed of several hundred acres of the land immediately surrounding the factory. Of course some factories will have more and some less as circumstances happen. This land, however, is peculiarly factory property. It is in fact a sort of home farm, and goes by the name of *Zeraat.* It is ploughed by factory bullocks, worked by factory coolies, and is altogether apart and separate from the ordinary lands held by the ryots and worked by them. (A ryot means a cultivator.) In most factories the Zeraats are farmed in the most thorough manner. Many now use the light Howard's plough, and apply quantities of manure.

The fields extend in vast unbroken plains all round the factory. The land is worked and pulverised, and reploughed and harrowed and cleaned, till not a lump the size of a pigeon's egg is to be seen. If necessary, it is carefully weeded several times before the crop is sown, and in fact, a fine clean stretch of Zeraat in Tirhoot or Chumparun will compare most favourably with any field in the highest farming districts of England or Scotland. The ploughing and other farm labour is done by bullocks. A staff of these, varying of course with the amount of land under cultivation, is kept at each factory. For their support a certain amount of sugar-cane is planted, and in the cold weather carrots are sown, and *gennara,* a kind of millet, and maize.

Both maize and gennara have broad green leaves, and long juicy succulent stalks. They grow to a good height, and when cut up and mixed with chopped straw and carrots, form a most excellent feed for cattle. Besides the bullocks, each factory keeps up a staff of generally excellent horses, for the use of the assistant or manager, on which he rides over his cultivation, and looks generally after the farm. Some of the native subordinates also have ponies, or Cabool horses, or country-breds; and for the feed of these animals some [illegible] acres of oats are sown every cold season. In most fac[illegible]

too, when any particular bit of the Zeraats gets exhausted by the constant repetition of indigo cropping, a rest is given it, by taking a crop of oil seeds or oats off the land. The oil seeds usually sown are mustard or rape. The oil is useful in the factory for oiling the screws or the machinery, and for other purposes.

The factory roads through the Zeraats are kept in most perfect order; many of them are metalled. The ditches are cleaned once a year. All thistles and weeds by the sides of the roads and ditches are ruthlessly cut down. The edges of all the fields are neatly trimmed and cut. Useless trees and clumps of jungle are cut down; and in fact the Zeraats round a factory show a perfect picture of orderly thrift, careful management, and neat, scientific, and elaborate farming.

Having got the Zeraats, the next thing is to extend the cultivation outside.

The land in India is not, as with us at home, parcelled out into large farms. There are wealthy proprietors, rajahs, baboos, and so on, who hold vast tracts of land, either by grant, or purchase, or hereditary succession; but the tenants are literally the children of the soil. Wherever a village nestles among its plaintan or mango groves, the land is parcelled out among the villagers. A large proprietor does not reckon up his farms as a landlord at home would do, but he counts his villages. In a village with a thousand acres belonging to it, there might be 100 or even 200 tenants farming the land. Each petty villager would have his acre or half acre, or four, or five, or ten, or twenty acres, as the case might be. He holds this by a "tenant right," and cannot be dispossessed as long as he pays his rent regularly. He can sell his tenant right, and the purchaser on paying the rent, becomes the *bonâ fide* possessor of the land to all intents and purposes.

The average rent of the village lands was, let me say,

one rupee eight annas an acre, the rent roll of the 1000 acres would be 1500 rupees. Out of this the government land revenue comes. Certain deductions have to be made—some ryots may be defaulters. The village temple, or the village Brahmin, may have to get something, the road-cess has to be paid, and so on. Taking everything into account, you arrive at a pretty fair view of what the rental is. If the proprietor of the village wants a loan of money, or if you offer to pay him the rent by half-yearly or quarterly instalments, you taking all the risk of collecting in turn from each ryot individually, he is often only too glad to accept your offer, and giving you a lease of the village for whatever term may be agreed on, you step in as virtually the landlord, and the ryots have to pay their rents to you.

In many cases by careful management, by remeasuring lands, settling doubtful boundaries, and generally working up the estate, you can much increase the rental, and actually make a profit on your bargain with the landlord. This department of indigo work is called Zemindaree. Having, then, got the village in lease, you summon in all your tenants; show them their rent accounts, arrange with them for the punctual payment of them, and get them to agree to cultivate a certain percentage of their land in indigo for you.

This percentage varies very considerably. In some places it is one acre in five, in some one in twenty. It all depends on local circumstances. You select the land, you give the seed, but the ryot has to prepare the field for sowing, he has to plough, weed, and reap the crop, and deliver it at the factory. For the indigo he gets so much per acre, the price being as near as possible the average price of an acre of ordinary produce: taking the average out-turn and prices of, say, ten years. It used formerly to be much less, but the ryot nowadays gets nearly double for his indigo what he got some ten or fifteen years ago, and this, although prices have not risen for the manufactured article, and the prices of la[illegible]

stores, machinery, live stock, etc., have more than doubled. In some parts the ryot gets paid so much per bundle of plants delivered at the vats, but generally in Behar, at least in north Behar, he is paid so much per acre or *Beegah*. I use the word acre as being more easily understood by people at home than Beegah. The Beegah varies in different districts, but is generally about two-thirds of an acre.

When his rent account, then, comes to be made out, the ryot gets credit for the price of his indigo grown and delivered; and this very often suffices, not only to clear his entire rent, but to leave a margin in hard cash for him to take home. Before the beginning of the indigo season, however, he comes into the factory and takes a cash advance on account of the indigo to be grown. This is often a great help to him, enabling him to get his seeds for his other lands, perhaps ploughs, or to buy a cart, or clothes for the family, or to replace a bullock that may have died; or to help to give a marriage portion to a son or daughter that he wants to get married.

You will thus see that we have cultivation to look after in all the villages round about the factory which we can get in lease. The ryot, in return for his cash advance, agrees to cultivate so much indigo at a certain price, for which he gets credit in his rent. Such, shortly, is our indigo system. In some villages the ryot will cultivate for us without our having the lease at all, and without taking advances. He grows the indigo as he would grow any other crop, as a pure speculation. If he has a good crop, he can get the price in hard cash from the factory, and a great deal is grown in this way in both Purneah and Bhaugulpore. This is called *Kooskee*, as against the system of advances, which is called *Tuccavee*.

The planter, then, has to be constantly over his villages, looking out for good lands, giving up bad fields, and taking new ones. He must watch what crops grow best in certain [illegible]s. He must see that he does not take lands where

water may lodge, and, on the other hand, avoid those that do not retain their moisture. He must attend also to the state of the other crops generally all over his cultivation, as the punctual payment of rents depends largely on the state of the crops. He must have his eyes open to everything going on, be able to tell the probable rent-roll of every village for miles around, know whether the ryots are lazy and discontented, or are industrious and hard-working. Up in the early morning, before the hot blazing sun has climbed on high, he is off on his trusty nag, through his Zeraats, with his greyhounds and terriers panting behind him. As he nears a village, the farm-servant in charge of that particular bit of cultivation, comes out with a low salaam, to report progress, or complain that so-and-so is not working up his field as he ought to do.

Over all the lands he goes, seeing where re-ploughing is necessary, ordering harrowing here, weeding there, or rolling somewhere else. He sees where the ditches need deepening, where the roads want levelling or widening, where a new bridge will be necessary, where lands must be thrown up and new ones taken in. He knows nearly all his ryots, and has a kind word for every one he passes; asks after their crops, their bullocks, or their land; rouses up the indolent; gives a cheerful nod to the industrious; orders this one to be brought in to settle his account, or that one to make greater haste with the preparation of his land, that he may not lose his moisture. In fact, he has his hands full till the mounting sun warns him to go back to breakfast. And so, with a rattling burst after a jackal or fox, he gets back to his bungalow to bathe, dress, and break his fast with fowl cutlets, and curry and rice, washed down with a wholesome tumbler of Bass.

CHAPTER III.

How to get our crop—The "Dangurs"—Farm servants and their duties—Kassee Rai—Hoeing—Ploughing—"Oustennie"—Coolies at work—Sowing—Difficulties the plant has to contend with—Weeding.

HAVING now got our land, water, and buildings—which latter I will describe further on—the next thing is to set to work to get our crop. Manufacture being finished, and the crop all cut by the beginning or middle of October, when the annual rains are over, it is of importance to have the lands dug up as early as possible, that the rich moisture, on which the successful cultivation of the crop mainly depends, may be secured before the hot west winds and strong sun of early spring lick it up.

Attached to every factory is a small settlement of labourers, belonging to a tribe of aborigines called *Dangurs*. These originally, I believe, came from Chota Nagpore, which seems to have been their primal home. They are a cheerful industrious race, have a distinct language of their own, and only intermarry with each other. Long ago, when there were no post carriages to the hills, and but few roads, the Dangurs were largely employed as dak runners, or postmen. Some few of them settled with their families on lands near the foot of the hills in Purneah, and gradually others made their way northwards, until now there is scarcely a factory in Behar that has not its Dangur tola, or village.

The men are tractable, merry-hearted, and faithful. The [illegible]nen betray none of the exaggerated modesty which is [illegible]teristic of Hindoo women generally. They never turn

aside and hide their faces as you pass, but look up to you with a merry smile on their countenances, and exchange greetings with the utmost frankness. In a future chapter I may speak at greater length of the Dangurs; at present it suffices to say, that they form a sort of appanage to the factory, and are in fact treated as part of the permanent staff.

Each Dangur when he marries, gets some grass and bamboos from the factory to build a house, and a small plot of ground to serve as a garden, for which he pays a very small rent, or in many instances nothing at all. In return, he is always on the spot ready for any factory work that may be going on, for which he has his daily wage. Some factories pay by the month, but the general custom is to charge for hoeing by piece-work, and during manufacture, when the work is constant, there is paid a monthly wage.

In the close foggy mornings of October and November, long before the sun is up, the Dangurs are hard at work in the Zeraats, turning up the soil with their *kodalies* (a kind of cutting hoe), and you can often hear their merry voices rising through the mist, as they crack jokes with each other to enliven their work, or troll one of their quaint native ditties.

They are presided over by a "mate," generally one of the oldest men and first settlers in the village. If he has had a large family, his sons look up to him, and his sons-in-law obey his orders with the utmost fealty. The "mate" settles all disputes, presents all grievances to the *sahib*, and all orders are given through him.

The indigo stubble which has been left in the ground is perhaps about a foot high, and as they cut it out, their wives and children come to gather up the sticks for fuel, and this of course also helps to clean the land. By eleven o'clock, when the sluggish mist has been dissipated by the rays of the scorching sun, the day's labour is nearly concluded. You will then see the swarthy Dangur, with his favourite child on his shoulder, wending his way back to his

followed by his comely wife carrying his hoe, and a tribe of little ones bringing up the rear, each carrying bundles of the indigo stubble which the industrious father has dug up during the early hours of morning.

In the afternoon out comes the *hengha*, which is simply a heavy flat log of wood, with a V-shaped cut or groove all along under its flat surface. To each end of the hengha a pair of bullocks are yoked, and two men standing on the log, and holding on by the bullocks' tails, it is slowly dragged over the field wherever the hoeing has been going on. The lumps and clods are caught in the groove on the under surface, and dragged along and broken up and pulverized, and the whole surface of the field thus gets harrowed down, and forms a homogeneous mass of light friable soil, covering the weeds and dirt to let them rot, exposing the least surface for the wind and heat to act on, and thus keeping the moisture in the soil.

Now is a busy time for the planter. Up early in the cold raw fog, he is over his Zeraats long before dawn, and round by his outlying villages to see the ryots at work in their fields. To each eighty or a hundred acres a man is attached called a *Tokedar*. His duty is to rouse out the ryots, see the hoes and ploughs at work, get the weeding done, and be responsible for the state of the cultivation generally. He will probably have two villages under him. If the village with its lands be very extensive, of course there will be a Tokedar for it alone, but frequently a Tokedar may have two or more villages under his charge. In the village, the head man—generally the most influential man in the community—also acts with the Tokedar, helping him to get ploughs, bullocks and coolies when these are wanted; and under him, the village *chowkeydar*, or watchman, sees that stray cattle do not get into the fields, that the roads, bridges and fences are not damaged, and so on. Over the Tokedars, again, are Zillahdars. "Zillah" is a small district. There may be eight or ten

villages and three or four Tokedars under a Zillahdar. The Zillahdar looks out for good lands to change for bad ones, where this is necessary, and where no objection is made by the farmer; sees that the Tokedars do their work properly; reports rain, blight, locusts, and other visitations that might injure the crop; watches all that goes on in his zillah, and makes his report to the planter whenever anything of importance happens in his particular part of the cultivation. Over all again comes the JEMADAR—the head man over the whole cultivation—the planter's right-hand man.

He is generally an old, experienced, and trusted servant. He knows all the lands for miles round, and the peculiar soils and products of all the villages far and near. He can tell what lands grow the best tobacco, what lands are free from inundation, what free from drought; the temper of the inhabitants of each village, and the history of each farm; where are the best ploughs, the best bullocks, and the best farming; in what villages you get most coolies for weeding; where you can get the best carts, the best straw, and the best of everything at the most favourable rates. He comes up each night when the day's work is done, and gets his orders for the morrow. You are often glad to take his advice on sowing, reaping, and other operations of the farm. He knows where the plant will ripen earliest, and where the leaf will be thickest, and to him you look for satisfaction if any screw gets loose in the outside farm-work.

He generally accompanies you in your morning ride, shows you your new lands, consults with you about throwing up exhausted fields, and is generally a sort of farm-bailiff or confidential land-steward. Where he is an honest, intelligent, and loyal man, he takes half the care and work off your shoulders. Such men are however rare, and if not very closely looked after, they are apt to abuse their position, and often harass the ryots needlessly, looking more to the feathering their own nests than the advancement of your interests.

The only Jemadar I felt I could thoroughly trust, was my first one at Parewah, an old Rajpoot, called Kassee Rai. He was a fine, ruddy-faced, white-haired old man, as independent and straightforward an old farmer as you could meet anywhere, and I never had reason to regret taking his advice on any matter. I never found him out in a lie, or in a dishonest or underhand action. Though over seventy years of age he was upright as a dart. He could not keep up with me when we went out riding over the fields, but he would be out the whole day over the lands, and was always the first at his work in the morning and the last to leave off at night. The ryots all loved him, and would do anything for him; and when poor old Kassee died, the third year he had been under me, I felt as if an old friend had gone. I never spoke an angry word to him, and I never had a fault to find with him.

When the hoeing has been finished in zeraat and zillah, and all the upturned soil battened down by the *hengha*, the next thing is to commence the ploughing. Your ploughmen are mostly low-caste men—Doosadhs, Chumars, Moosahurs, Gwallahs, *et hoc genus omne*. The Indian plough, so like a big misshapen wooden pickaxe, has often been described. It however turns up the light soft soil very well considering its pretensions, and those made in the factory workshops are generally heavier and sharper than the ordinary village plough. Our bullocks too, being strong and well fed, the ploughing in the zeraats is generally good.

The ploughing is immediately followed up by the *hengha*, which again triturates and breaks up the clods, rolls the sticks, leaves, and grass roots together, brings the refuse and dirt to the surface, and again levels the soil, and prevents the wind from taking away the moisture. The land now looks fine and fresh and level, but very dirty. A host of [illegible]lies are put on the fields with small sticks in their hands. [illegible]the Dangur women and children are there, with men

women, and children of all the poorest classes from the villages round, whom the attractions of wages or the exertions of headmen Tokedars and Zillahdars have brought together to earn their daily bread. With the sticks they beat and break up every clod, leaving not one behind the size of a walnut. They collect all the refuse, weeds, and dirt, which are heaped up and burnt on the field, and so they go on till the zeraats look as clean as a nobleman's garden, and you would think that surely this must satisfy the fastidious eye of the planter. But no, our work is not half begun yet.

It is rather a strange sight to see some four or five hundred coolies squatted in a long irregular line, chattering, laughing, shouting, or squabbling. A dense cloud of dust rises over them, and through the dim obscurity one hears the ceaseless sound of the thwack! thwack! as their sticks rattle on the ground. White dust lies thick on each swarthy skin; their faces are like faces in a pantomime. There are the flashing eyes and the grinning rows of white teeth; all else is clouded in thick layers of dust, with black spots and stencillings showing here and there like a picture in sepia and chalk. As they near the end of the field they redouble their thwacking, shuffle along like land-crabs, and while the Mates, Peons, and Tokedars shout at them to encourage them, they raise a roar loud enough to wake the dead. The dust rises in denser clouds, the noise is deafening, a regular mad hurry-scurry, a wild boisterous scramble ensues, and amid much chaffing, noise, and laughter, they scramble off again to begin another length of land; and so the day's work goes on.

The planter has to count his coolies several times a day, or they would cheat him. Some come in the morning, get counted, and their names put on the roll, and then go off till pay-time comes round. Some come for an hour or two, and send a relative in the evening when the pice are being paid out, to get the wage of work they have not done. All

paid in pice—little copper bits of coin, averaging about sixty-four to the rupee. However, you soon come to know the coolies by sight, and after some experience are rarely "taken in"; but many young beginners get "done" most thoroughly till they become accustomed to the tricks of the artless and unsophisticated coolie.

The type of feature along a line of coolies is as a rule a very forbidding and degraded one. They are mostly of the very poorest class. Many of them are plainly half silly, or wholly idiotic; not a few are deaf and dumb; others are crippled or deformed, and numbers are leprous and scrofulous. Numbers of them are afflicted in some districts with goitre, caused probably by bad drinking water; all have a pinched, withered, wan look, that tells of hard work and insufficient fare. It is a pleasure to turn to the end of the line, where the Dangur women and boys and girls generally take their place. Here are the loudest laughter, and the sauciest faces. The children are merry, chubby, fat things, with well-distended stomachs and pleasant looks; a merry smile rippling over their broad fat cheeks as they slyly glance up at you. The women—with huge earrings in their ears, and a perfect load of heavy brass rings on their arms—chatter away, make believe to be shy, and show off a thousand coquettish airs. Their very toes are bedizened with brass rings; and long festoons of red, white, and blue beads hang pendent round their necks.

In the evening the line is re-formed before the bungalow. A huge bag of copper coin is produced. The old Lallah, or writer, with spectacles on nose, squats down in the middle of the assembled coolies, and as each name is called, the mates count out the pice, and make it over to the coolie, who forthwith hurries off to get his little purchases made at the village Bunneah's shop; and so, on a poor supper of parched peas, boiled rice, with no other relish but a pinch of salt, the coolie crawls to bed, only to dream of more hard work

and scanty fare on the morrow. Poor thing! a village coolie has a hard time of it! During the hot months, if rice be cheap and plentiful, he can jog along pretty comfortably, but when the cold nights come on, and he cowers in his wretched hut, hungry, half naked, cold, and wearied, he is of all objects most pitiable. It is, however, a fact little creditable to his more prosperous fellow-countrymen, that he gets better paid for his labour in connection with factory work, than he does

COOLIE'S HUT.

in many cases for tasks forced on him by the leading ryots of the village in connection with their own fields.

This first cleaning of the fields—or, as it is called, *Oustennie*—being finished, the lands are all again re-ploughed, re-harrowed, and then once more re-cleaned by the coolies, till not a weed or spot of dirt remains; and till the whole surface is uniformly soft, friable, moist, and clean. We have n[illegible] some breathing time; and as this is the most enjoy[illegible]

season of the year, when the days are cool, and roaring wood fires at night remind us of home, we hunt, visit, race, dance, and generally enjoy ourselves. Should heavy rain fall, as it sometimes does about Christmas and early in February, the whole cultivation gets beaten down and caked over. In such a case amusements must for a time be thrown aside, till all the lands have been again re-ploughed. Of course we are never wholly idle. There are always rents to collect, matters to adjust in connexion with our villages and tenantry, law-suits to recover bad debts, to enforce contracts, or protect manorial or other rights,—but generally speaking, when the lands have been prepared, we have a slack season or breathing time for a month or so.

Arrangements having been made for the supply of seed, which generally comes from about the neighbourhood of Cawnpore, as February draws near we make preparations for beginning our sowings. February is the usual month, but it depends on the moisture, and sometimes sowings may go on up till May and June. In Purneah and Bhaugulpore, where the culivation is much rougher than in Tirhoot, the sowing is done broadcast. And in Bengal the sowing is often done upon the soft mud which is left on the banks of the rivers at the retiring of the annual floods. In Tirhoot, however, where the high farming I have been trying to describe is practised, the sowing is done by means of drills. Drills are got out, overhauled, and put in thorough repair. Bags of seed are sent out to the villages, advances for bullocks are given to the ryots, and on a certain day when all seems favourable—no sign of rain or high winds—the drills are set at work, and day and night the work goes on, till all the cultivation has been sown. As the drills go along, the hengha follows close behind, covering the seed in the furrows; and once again it is put over, till the fields are all level, shining, and clean, waiting for the first appearance of the young soft [illegible]ts.

These, after some seven, nine, or perhaps fifteen days, according to the weather, begin to appear in long lines of delicate pale yellowish green. This is a most anxious time. Should rain fall, the whole surface of the earth gets caked and hard, and the delicate plant burns out, or being chafed against the hard surface crust, it withers and dies. If the wind gets into the east, it brings a peculiar blight which settles round the leaf and collar of the stem of the young plant, chokes it, and sweeps off miles and miles of it. If hot west winds blow, the plant gets black, discoloured, burnt up, and dead. A south wind often brings caterpillars—at least this pest often makes its appearance when the wind is southerly; but as often as not caterpillars find their way to the young plant in the most mysterious manner—no one knowing whence they come. Daily, nay almost hourly, reports come in from all parts of the zillah: now you hear of "Lahee," blight on some field; now it is "Jhirka," scorching, or "Pilooa," caterpillars. In some places the seed may have been bad or covered with too much earth, and the plant comes up straggling and thin. If there is abundant moisture, this must be re-sown. In fact, there is never-ending anxiety and work at this season, but when the plant has got into ten or fifteen leaf, and is an inch or two high, the most critical time is over, and one begins to think about the next operation, namely WEEDING.

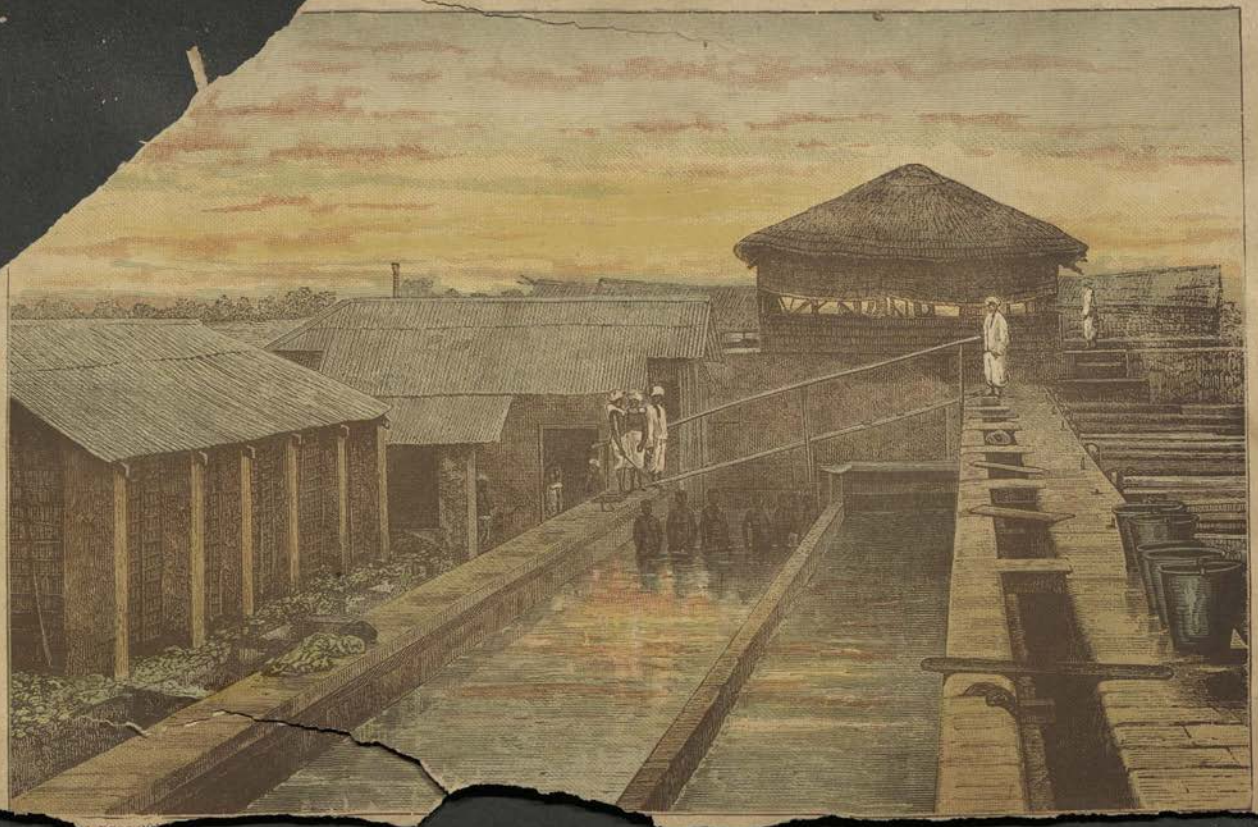
The coolies are again in requisition. Each comes armed with a *coorpee*,—this is a small metal spatula, broad-pointed, with which they dig out the weeds with amazing deftness. Sometimes they may inadvertently take out a single stem of indigo with the weeds: the eye of the mate or Tokedar espies this at once, and the careless coolie is treated to a volley of Hindoo Billingsgate, in which all his relations are abused to the seventh generation. By the time the first weeding is finished, the plant will be over a foot high, and if necessary a second weeding is then given. After the second we

and if any rain has fallen in the interim, the plant will be fully two feet high.

It is now a noble-looking expanse of beautiful green waving foliage. As the wind ruffles its myriads of leaves, the sparkle of the sunbeams on the undulating mass produces the most wonderful combinations of light and shade; feathery sprays of a delicate pale green curl gracefully all over the field. It is like an ocean of vegetation, with billows of rich colour chasing each other, and blending in harmonious hues; the whole field looking a perfect oasis of beauty amid the surrounding dull brown tints of the season.

It is now time to give the plant a light touch of the plough. This eases the soil about the roots, lets in air and light, tends to clean the undergrowth of weeds, and gives it a great impetus. The operation is called *Bedahenee.* By the beginning of June the tiny red flower is peeping from its leafy sheath, the lower leaves are turning yellowish and crisp, and it is almost time to begin the grandest and most important operation of the season, the manufacture of the dye from the plant.

To this you have been looking forward during the cold raw foggy days of November, when the ploughs were hard at work,—during the hot fierce winds of March, and the still, sultry, breathless early days of June, when the air was so still and oppressive that you could scarcely breathe. These sultry days are the lull before the storm—the pause before the moisture-laden clouds of the monsoon roll over the land "rugged and brown," and the wild rattle of thunder and the lurid glare of quivering never-ceasing lightning herald in the annual rains. The manufacture however deserves a chapter to itself.



CHAPTER IV.

Manufacture of Indigo—Loading the vats—Beating—Boiling, straining, and pressing—Scene in the Factory—Fluctuation of produce—Chemistry of Indigo.

INDIGO is manufactured solely from the leaf. When arrangements have been made for cutting and carting the plant from the fields, the vats and machinery are all made ready, and a day is appointed to begin "Mahye" or manufacture. The apparatus consists of, first, a strong serviceable pump for pumping up water into the vats: this is now mostly done by machinery, but many small factories still use the old Persian wheel, which may be shortly described as simply an endless chain of buckets, working on a revolving wheel or drum. The machine is worked by bullocks, and as the buckets ascend full from the well, they are emptied during their revolution into a small trough at the top, and the water is conveyed into a huge masonry reservoir or tank, situated high up above the vats, which forms a splendid open-air bath for the planter when he feels inclined for a swim. Many of these tanks, called *Kajhana*, are capable of containing 40,000 cubic feet of water or more.

Below, and in a line with this reservoir, are the steeping vats, each capable of containing about 2000 cubic feet of water when full. Of course the vats vary in size, but what is called a *pucca* vat is of the above capacity. When the fresh green plant is brought in, the carts with their loads are ranged in line, opposite these loading vats. The loading coolies, "Bojhunneas"—so called from "*Bojh*," a bundle

jump into the vats, and receive the plant from the cart-men, stacking it up in perpendicular layers, till the vat is full: a horizontal layer is put on top to make the surface look even. Bamboo battens are then placed over the plant, and these are pressed down, and held in their place by horizontal beams, working in upright posts. The uprights have holes at intervals of six inches. An iron pin is put in one of the holes; a lever is put under this pin, and the beam pressed down, till the next hole is reached and a fresh pin inserted, which keeps the beam down in its place. When sufficient pressure has been applied, the sluice in the reservoir is opened, and the water runs by a channel into the vat till it is full. Vat after vat is thus filled till all are finished, and the plant is allowed to steep from ten to thirteen or fourteen hours, according to the state of the weather, the temperature of the water, and other conditions and circumstances which have all to be carefully noted.

At first a greenish yellow tinge appears in the water, gradually deepening to an intense blue. As the fermentation goes on, froth forms on the surface of the vat, the water swells up, bubbles of gas arise to the surface, and the whole range of vats presents a frothing, bubbling, sweltering appearance, indicative of the chemical action going on in the interior. If a torch be applied to the surface of a vat, the accumulated gas ignites with a loud report, and a blue lambent flame travels with amazing rapidity over the effervescent liquid. In very hot weather I have seen the water swell up over the mid walls of the vats, till the whole range would be one uniform surface of frothing liquid, and on applying a light, the report has been as loud as that of a small cannon, and the flame has leapt from vat to vat like the flitting will-o'-the-wisp on the surface of some miasmatic marsh.

When fermentation has proceeded sufficiently, the temperature of the vat lowers somewhat, and the water, which

has been globular and convex on the surface and at the sides, now becomes distinctly convex and recedes a very little. This is a sign that the plant has been steeped long enough, and that it is now time to open the vat. A pin is knocked out from the bottom, and the pent-up liquor rushes out in a golden yellow stream tinted with blue and green into the beating vat, which lies parallel to, but at a lower level than the loading vat.

Of course as the vats are loaded at different hours, and the steeping varies with circumstances, they must be ready to open also at different intervals. There are two men specially engaged to look after the opening. The time of loading each vat is carefully noted; the time it will take to steep is guessed at, and an hour for opening written down. When this hour arrives, the *Gunta parree*, or timekeeper, looks at the vat, and if it appears ready he gets the pinmen to knock out the pin and let the steeped liquor run into the beating vat.

Where there are many vats, this goes on all night, and by the morning the beating vats are all full of steeped liquor, and ready to be beaten.

The beating now is mostly done by machinery; but the old style was very different. A gang of coolies (generally Dangurs) were put into the vats, having long sticks with a disc at the end, with which, standing in two rows, they threw up the liquor into the air. The quantity forced up by the one coolie encounters in mid air that sent up by the man standing immediately opposite to him, and the two jets meeting and mixing confusedly together, tumble down in broken frothy masses into the vat. Beginning with a slow steady stroke the coolies gradually increase the pace, shouting out a hoarse wild song at intervals; till, what with the swish and splash of the falling water, the measured beat of the *furrowahs* or beating rods, and the yells and cries with which they excite each other, the noise is almost deafening.

water, which at first is of a yellowish green, is now beginning to assume an intense blue tint; this is the result of the oxygenation going on. As the blue deepens, the exertions of the coolie increase, till with every muscle straining, head thrown back, chest expanded, his long black hair dripping with white foam, and his bronzed naked body glistening with blue liquor, he yells and shouts and twists and contorts his body till he looks like a true "blue devil." To see eight or ten vats full of yelling howling blue creatures, the water splashing high in mid air, the foam flecking the walls, and the measured beat of the *furrowahs* rising weird-like into the morning air, is almost enough to shake the nerve of a stranger, but it is music in the planter's ear and he can scarce refrain from yelling out in sympathy with his coolies, and sharing in their frantic excitement. Indeed it is often necessary to encourage them if a vat proves obstinate, and the colour refuses to come—an event which occasionally does happen. It is very hard work beating, and when this constant violent exercise is kept up for about three hours (which is the time generally taken), the coolies are pretty well exhausted, and require a rest.

During the beating, two processes are going on simultaneously. One is chemical—oxygenation—turning the yellowish green dye into a deep intense blue; the other is mechanical—a separation of the particles of dye from the water in which it is held in solution. The beating seems to do this, causing the dye to granulate in larger particles.

When the vat has been beaten, the coolies remove the froth and scum from the surface of the water, and then leave the contents to settle. The fecula or dye, or *mall*, as it is technically called, now settles at the bottom of the vat, in a soft pulpy sediment, and the waste liquor left on the top is let off through graduated holes in the front. Pin after pin gradually removed, and the clear sherry-coloured waste [illegible]d to run out till the last hole in the series is reached,

To face page 394.

Vincent Brook

Indigo Beaters at work in the Vats.

and nothing but dye remains in the vat. By this time the coolies have had a rest and food, and now they return to the works, and either lift up the *mall* in earthen jars and take it to the mall tank, or—as is now more commonly done—they run it along a channel to the tank, and then wash out and clean the vat to be ready for the renewed beating on the morrow. When all the *mall* has been collected in the mall tank, it is next pumped up into the straining room. It is here strained through successive layers of wire gauze and cloth, till, free from dirt, sand and impurity, it is run into the large iron boilers, to be subjected to the next process. This is the boiling. This operation usually takes two or three hours, after which it is run off along narrow channels, till it reaches the straining-table. It is a very important part of the manufacture, and has to be carefully done. The straining-table is an oblong shallow wooden frame, in the shape of a trough, but all composed of open woodwork. It is covered by a large straining-sheet, on which the mall settles; while the waste water trickles through and is carried away by a drain. When the mall has stood on the table all night, it is next morning lifted up by scoops and buckets and put into the presses. These are square boxes of iron or wood, with perforated sides and bottom and a removable perforated lid. The insides of the boxes are lined with press cloths, and when filled these cloths are carefully folded over the *mall*, which is now of the consistence of starch; and a heavy beam, worked on two upright three-inch screws, is let down on the lid of the press. A long lever is now put on the screws, and the nut worked slowly round. The pressure is enormous, and all the water remaining in the *mall* is pressed through the cloth and perforations in the press-box till nothing but the pure indigo remains behind.

The presses are now opened, and a square slab of dark moist indigo, about three or three and a half inches thick, carried off on the bottom of the press (the top and

having been removed), and carefully placed on the cutting frame. This frame corresponds in size to the bottom of the press, and is grooved in lines somewhat after the manner of a chess-board. A stiff iron rod with a brass wire attached is put through the groove under the slab, the wire is brought over the slab, and the rod being pulled smartly through brings the wire with it, cutting the indigo much in the same way as you would cut a bar of soap. When all the slab has been cut into bars, the wire and rod are next put into the grooves at right angles to the bars and again pulled through, thus dividing the bars into cubical cakes. Each cake is then stamped with the factory mark and number, and all are noted down in the books. They are then taken to the drying-house; this is a large airy building, with strong shelves of bamboo reaching to the roof, and having narrow passages between the tiers of shelves. On these shelves or *mychans*, as they are called, the cakes are ranged to dry. The drying takes two or three months, and the cakes are turned and moved at frequent intervals, till thoroughly ready for packing. All the little pieces and corners and chips are carefully put by on separate shelves, and packed separately. Even the sweepings and refuse from the sheets and floor are all carefully collected, mixed with water, boiled separately, and made into cakes, which are called "washings."

During the drying a thick mould forms on the cakes. This is carefully brushed off before packing, and, mixed with sweepings and tiny chips, is all ground up in a hand-mill, packed in separate chests, and sold as dust. In October, when *mahye* is over, and the preparation of the land going on again, the packing begins. The cakes, each of separate date, are carefully scrutinised, and placed in order of quality. The finest qualities are packed first, in layers, in mango-wood boxes; the boxes are first weighed empty, re-weighed when full, and the difference gives the nett weight of the [illegible]. The tare, gross, and nett weights are printed legibly

on the chests, along with the factory mark and number of the chest, and when all are ready, they are sent down to the brokers in Calcutta for sale. Such shortly is the system of manufacture.

During *mahye* the factory is a busy scene. Long before break of day the ryots and coolies are busy cutting the plant, leaving it in green little heaps for the cartmen to load. In the early morning the carts are seen converging to the factory on every road, crawling along like huge green beetles. Here a cavalcade of twenty or thirty carts, there in clusters of twos or threes. When they reach the factory the loaders have several vats ready for the reception of the plant, while others are taking out the already steeped plant of yesterday; staggering under its weight, as, dripping with water, they toss it on the vast accumulating heap of refuse material.

Down in the vats below, the beating coolies are plashing and shouting and yelling, or the revolving wheel (where machinery is used) is scattering clouds of spray and foam in the blinding sunshine. The firemen, stripped to the waist, are feeding the furnaces with the dried stems of last year's crop, which forms our only fuel. The smoke hovers in volumes over the boiling-house. The pinmen are busy sorting their pins, rolling hemp round them to make them fit the holes more exactly. Inside the boiling-house, dimly discernible through the clouds of stifling steam, the boiler-men are seen with long rods, stirring slowly the boiling mass of bubbling blue. The clank of the levers resounds through the pressing-house, or the hoarse gutteral "hah, hah!" as the huge lever is strained and pulled at by the press-house coolies. The straining-table is being cleaned by the table "mate" and his coolies, while the washerman stamps on his sheets and press-cloths to extract all the colour from them, and the cake-house boys run to and fro between the cutting-table and the cake-house with batches of cakes on

heads, borne on boards, like a baker taking his hot rolls from the oven, or like a busy swarm of ants taking the spoil of the granary to their forest haunt. Everywhere there is a confused jumble of sounds. The plash of water, the clank of machinery, the creaking of wheels, the roaring of the furnaces, mingle with the shouts, cries, and yells of the excited coolies; the vituperations of the drivers as some terrified or obstinate bullock plunges madly about; the objurgations of the "mates" as some lazy fellow eases his stroke in the beating vats; the cracking of whips as the bullocks tear round the circle where the Persian wheel creaks and rumbles in the damp, dilapidated wheel-house; the dripping buckets revolving clumsily on the drum; the arriving and departing carts; the clang of the anvil, as the blacksmith and his men hammer away at some huge screw which has been bent; the hurrying crowds of cartmen and loaders with their burdens of fresh green plant or dripping refuse;—form such a medley of sights and sounds as I have never seen equalled in any other industry.

The planter has to be here, there, and everywhere. He sends carts to this village or to that, according as the crop ripens. Coolies must be counted and paid daily. The stubble must be ploughed to give the plant a start for the second growth whenever the weather will admit of it. Reports have to be sent to the agents and owners. The boiling must be narrowly watched, as also the beating and the straining. He has a large staff of native assistants, but if his *mahye* is to be successful, his eye must be over all. It is an anxious time, but the constant work is grateful, and when the produce is good, and everything working smoothly, it is perhaps the most enjoyable time of the whole year. Is it nothing to see the crop, on which so much care has been expended, which you have watched day by day through all the vicissitudes of the season, through drought and flood and blight; is it nothing to see it safely harvested, and your

shelves filling day by day with fine sound cakes, the representatives of wealth, that will fill your pockets with commission, and build up your name as a careful and painstaking planter?

"What's your produce?" is now the first query at this season, when planters meet. Calculations are made daily, nay hourly, to see how much is being got per beegah, or how much per vat. The presses are calculated to weigh so much. Some days you will get a press a vat, some days it will mount up to two presses a vat, and at other times it will recede to half a press a vat, or even less. Cold wet weather reduces the produce. Warm sunny weather will send it up again. Short stunted plant from poor lands will often reduce your average per acre, to be again sent up as fresh, hardy, leafy plant comes in from some favourite village, where you have new and fertile lands, or where the plant from the rich zeraats laden with broad strong leaf is tumbled into the loading vat.

So far as I know, there seems to be no law of produce. It is the most erratic and incomprehensible thing about planting. One day your presses are full to straining, next day half of them lie empty. No doubt the state of the weather, the quality of your plant, the temperature of the water, the length of time steeping, and other things have an influence; but I know of no planter who can entirely and satisfactorily account for the sudden and incomprehensible fluctuations and variations which undoubtedly take place in the produce or yield of the plant. It is a matter of more interest to the planter than to the general public; but all I can say is, that if the circumstances attendant on any sudden change in the yielding powers of the plant were m[illegible] accurately noted; if the chemical conditions of the [illegible] the air, and the raw material itself, more esp[illegible] reference to the soil on which it grows, the time[illegible] transit from the field to the vat, and other poi[illegible]

at once suggest themselves to a practical planter, were more carefully, methodically, and scientifically observed, some coherent theory resulting in plain practical results might be evolved.

Planters should attend more to this. I believe the chemical history of indigo has yet to be written. The whole manufacture, so far as chemistry is concerned, is yet crude

INDIAN FACTORY PEON.

and ill-digested. I know that by careful experiment, and close scientific investigation and observation, the preparation of indigo could be much improved. So far as the mechanical ...pliances for the manufacture go, the last ten years, 1870 ...880, have witnessed amazing and rapid improvements. ... now wanted, is, that what has been done for the ...anical appliances, should be done for the proper ... of the chemical changes and conditions in the

constitution of the plant, and in the various processes of its manufacture.*

* Since the above chapter was written, Mons. P. I. Michea, a French chemist of some experience in Indigo matters, has patented an invention (the result of much study, experiment, and investigation), by the application of which an immense increase in the produce of the plant has been obtained in several factories where it has been worked in Jessore, Purneah, Kishnaghur, and other places. This increase, varying according to circumstances, has in some instances reached the amazing extent of 30 to 47 per cent., and so far from being attended with a deterioration of quality the dye produced is said to be finer than that obtained under the old crude process described in the above chapter. This shows what a waste must have been going on, and what may yet be done by properly organised scientific investigation. I firmly believe that with an intelligent application of the principles of chemistry and agricultural science, not only to the manufacture, but to growth, cultivation, nature of the soil, application of manures, and other such departments of the business, quite a revolution will set in, and a new era in the history of this great industry will be inaugurated. Less area for crop will be required, working expenses will be reduced, a greater out-turn, and a more certain crop secured, and all classes, planter and ryot alike, will be benefited.

CHAPTER V.

Parewah factory—A "Bobbery Pack"—Hunt through a village after a cat—The pariah dog of India—Fate of "Pincher"—Rampore hound—Persian greyhound—Caboolee dogs—A jackal hunt—Incidents of the chase.

AFTER living at Puttihee for two years, I was transferred to another out-factory in the same concern, called Parewah. There was here a very nice little three-roomed bungalow, with airy verandahs all round. It was a pleasant change from Puttihee, and the situation was very pretty. A small stream, almost dry in the hot weather, but a swollen, deep, rapid torrent in the rains, meandered past the factory. Nearing the bullock-house it suddenly took a sweep to the left in the form of a wide horseshoe, and in this bend or pocket was situated the bungalow, with a pretty terraced garden sloping gently to the stream. Thus the river was in full view from both the front and the back verandahs. In front, and close on the bank of the river, stood the kitchen, fowl-house, and offices. To the right of the compound were the stables, while behind the bungalow, and some distance down the stream, the wheel-house, vats, press-house, boiling-house, cake-house, and workshops were grouped together. I was but nine miles from the head-factory, and the same distance from the station of Mooteeharree, while over the river, and but three miles off, I had the factory of Meerpore, with its hospitable manager as my nearest neighbour. His and mine lay contiguous. In fact, some of his villages

been invaded. Village clearings had to be made in the most salubrious localities procurable for my faithful followers from Tirhoot and Bhaugulpore, who had accompanied me into these inhospitable and fever-haunted solitudes. Wells had to be dug; groves of fruit trees planted; brick kilns erected, and an indigo factory, with vats, reservoir, and all necessary buildings and appurtenances, had to be established. I had to check the incursions of lawless desperadoes from neighbouring *talooks*, who periodically swooped down on my scattered villages, and harried the herds, stole the grain, or filched the forest products of my domain. Sometimes on horseback, more commonly on my staunch and trusty little *mukna* elephant *Motee* ("The Pearl"), and often, when the fever and ague were on me, in a litter borne by faithful bearers, I perambulated the forest, supervising the operations of the coolies, cheering and encouraging them by my presence, and generally directing the beneficent work of industrial settlement and reclamation of the wilderness to the use and habitation of man; surely as noble a task as can well engage the energy and brain of any pioneer, and, in my humble judgment, far transcending the too often abused and degraded *rôle* of politician or even, alas! preacher.

In very truth, I at all events can say that having [illegible] through many and varied experi[illegible] every note in the gamut of [illegible] back to my happy days of "te[illegible]" as a planter and pioneer of settlement with the most unalloyed feelings of satisfaction, and with a supreme longing that I could [illegible] them all over again.

I have tried to conjure up, all too imperfect[illegible] indistinct vision of the hopes and aspirations th[illegible] me. I have tried, all too inadequately, to [illegible] faint conception of the problems that p[illegible] the daily routine of a life such as is le[illegible] finest spirits of our race, in the p[illegible]

East. I have endeavoured to paint in bold outline, by only a few suggestive touches, the opportunities for real honest work that are included in the range of duties pertaining to such a sphere of labour as that in which so many brave young pioneers are fighting now. The reader, if he has any sympathy and imagination, can supply the rest.

Let me now fill in the picture by a few rapid details. Let me pourtray the environment, physical and material, in which I now found myself.

The bungalow of earthen walls, thick and cool, well plastered with ochre-coloured earth outside, and kalsomined interiorly, having a broad shady verandah, a well thatched, steep pitched roof, and commodious comfortable rooms, is shadowed by a mighty *peepul* tree, around whose giant butt I have grouped numberless ferns and orchids, culled from the forest, and beneath whose grateful amplitude of bough and twig and leaf, the dogs lie placidly dozing nearly all the day. In the shadow, too, and close by, is a stout wooden cage with iron bars, and chained to a great staple in the tree itself is a magnificent black panther, one of my numerous pets. Two affectionate porcupines here also generally have their siesta during the day. Their frugivorous tastes make them ardent "cupboard lovers," and they can always be "wooed and won" into docility by a present of bananas. How their quil' rattle as they shuffle along after me sometimes! They freely consort with the terriers, and are not a bit afraid of their proximity, feeling no doubt perfectly in their panoply of mail. In the verandah, at one end litter of four jackals, and two little foxes, with their k eyes and sharp roguish muzzles; and at the an ample wired-in space, I have some dozen from the jungle, being tended in most a fat old clucking foster-mother from oung pea-fowl are ravenously fond of *eper*" brings in a supply of these

To face page 402.

lay beyond some of mine, and he had to ride through part of my cultivation to reach them.

Not unfrequently we would meet in the zillah of a morning, when we would invariably make for the nearest patch of grass or jungle, and enjoy a hunt together. In the cool early mornings, when the heavy night dews still lie glittering on the grass, when the cobwebs seem strung with pearls, and faint lines of soft fleecy mist lie in the hollows by the water-courses; long ere the hot, fiery sun has left his crimson bed behind the cold grey horizon, we are out, each on our favourite horse, the wiry, long-limbed *syce* or groom trotting along behind us. The *mehter* or dog-keeper is also in attendance with a couple of greyhounds in leash, and a motley pack of wicked little terriers frisking and frolicking behind him. This mongrel collection is known as "the Bobbery Pack," and forms a certain adjunct to every assistant's bungalow in the district. I had one very noble-looking kangaroo hound that I had brought from Australia with me, and my "bobbery pack" of terriers contained canine specimens of all sorts, sizes, and colours.

On nearing a village, you would see one black fellow, "Pincher," set off at a round trot ahead, with seemingly the most innocent air in the world. "Tilly," "Tiny," and "Nipper," follow.

Then "Dandy," "Curly," "Brandy," and "Nettle," till, spying a cat in the distance, the whole pack with a whimper of excitement dash off at a mad scramble, the hound straining meanwhile at the slip, till he almost pulls the *mehter* off his legs. Off goes the cat, round the corner of a hut with her tail puffed up to fully three times its normal size. Round in mad, eager pursuit rattle the terriers, thirsting for her blood. The *syce* dashes forward, vainly hoping to turn the from their quest. Now a village dog, roused from his n ing nap, bounds out with a demoniac howl, which is up and echoed by all the curs in the village.

Meanwhile the row inside the hut is fiendish. The sleeping family, rudely roused by the yelping pack, utter the most discordant screams. The women, with garments fluttering behind them, rush out beating their breasts, thinking the very devil is loose. The wails of the unfortunate cat mingled with the short snapping barks of the pack, or a howl of anguish as puss inflicts a caress on the face of some too careless or reckless dog. A howling village cur has rashly ventured too near. "Pincher" has him by the hind leg before you could say "Jack Robinson." Leaving the dead cat for "Toby" and "Nettle" to worry, the whole pack now fiercely attack the luckless *Pariah* dog. A dozen of his village mates dance madly outside the ring, but are too wise or too cowardly to come to closer quarters. The kangaroo hound has now fairly torn the rope from the keeper's hand, and with one mighty bound is in the middle of the fight, scattering the village dogs right and left. The whole village is now in commotion; the *syce* and keeper shout the names of the terriers in vain. Oaths, cries, shouts, and screams mingle with the yelping and growling of the combatants, till riding up, I disperse the worrying pack with a few cracks of my hunting whip, and so on again over the zillah, leaving the women and children to recover their scattered senses, the old men to grumble over their broken slumbers, and the boys and young men to wonder at the pluck and dash of the *Belaitee Kookoor,* or English dog.

The common Pariah dog, or village dog of India, is a perfect cur; a mangy, carrion-loving, yellow-fanged, howling brute. A most unlovely and unloving beast. As you pass his village he will bounce out on you with the fiercest bark and the most menacing snarl; but lo! if a terrier the size of a teacup but boldly go at him, down goes his tail like a tea-handle, he turns white with fear, and, like the arrant coward that he is, tumbles on his back and fairly screams for mercy. I have often been amused to see a great hulking

cowardly brute come out like an avalanche at "Pincher," expecting to make one mouthful of him. What a look of bewilderment he would put on, as my gallant little "Pincher," with a short, sharp, defiant bark, would go boldly at him! The huge yellow brute would stop dead short on all four legs, and as the rest of my pack would come scampering round the corner, he would find himself the centre of a ring of indomitable assailants.

How he curses his short-sighted temerity. With one long howl of utter dismay and deadly fear, he manages to get away from the pack, leaving my little doggies to come proudly round my horse with their mouths full of fur, and each of their little tails as stiff as an iron ramrod.

That "Pincher," in some respects, was a very fiend incarnate. There was no keeping him in. He was constantly getting into hot water himself, and leading the pack into all sorts of mischief. He was as bold as brass and as courageous as a lion. He stole food, worried sheep and goats, and was never out of a scrape. I tried thrashing him, tying him up, half starving him, but all to no purpose. He would be into every hut in a village whenever he had the chance, overturning brass pots, eating up rice and curries, and throwing the poor villager's household into dismay and confusion. He would never leave a cat if he once saw it. I've seen him scramble through the roofs of more than one hut, and oust the cat from its fancied stronghold.

I put him into an indigo vat with a big dog jackal once, and he whipped the jackal single-handed. He did not kill it, but he worried it till the jackal shammed dead and would not "come to the scratch." "Pincher's" ears were perfect shreds, and his scars were as numerous almost as his hairs. My gallant "Pincher"! His was a sad end. He got eaten up by an alligator in the "Dhaus," a sluggish stream at Bhaugulpore. I had all my pack in the boat with me, the stream was swollen and full of weeds. A jackal ga[illegible]

on the bank, and "Pincher" bounded over the side of the boat at once. I tried to "grab" him, and nearly upset the boat in doing so. Our boat was going rapidly down stream, and "Pincher" tried to get ashore, but got among the weeds. He gave a bark, poor gallant little dog, for help, but just then we saw a dark square snout shoot athwart the stream. A half-smothered sobbing cry from "Pincher," and the bravest little dog I ever possessed was gone for ever.

There is another breed of large, strong-limbed, big-boned dogs, called Rampore hounds. They are a cross breed from the original upcountry dog and the Persian greyhound. Some call them the Indian greyhound. They seem to be bred principally in the Rampore-Bareilly district, but one or more are generally to be found in every planter's pack. They are fast and strong enough, but I have often found them bad at tackling, and they are too fond of their keeper ever to make an affectionate faithful dog to the European.

Another somewhat similar breed is the *Tazi*. This, although not so large a dog as the Rampooree, is a much pluckier animal, and when well trained will tackle a jackal with the utmost determination. He has a wrinkled almost hairless skin, but a very uncertain temper, and he is not very amenable to discipline. *Tazi* is simply the Persian word for a greyhound, and refers to no particular breed. The common name for a dog is *Kutta*, pronounced *Cootta*, but the Tazi has certainly been an importation from the North-west, hence the Persian name. The wandering Caboolees, who come down to the plains once a year with dried fruits, spices, and other products of field or garden, also bring with them the dogs of their native country for sale, and on occasion they bring lovely long-haired white Persian cats, very beautiful animals. These Caboolee dogs are tall, long-limbed brutes, generally [illegible]e, with a long thin snout, very long silky-haired drooping [illegible]nd generally wearing tufts of hair on their legs and [illegible]what like the feathering of a spaniel, which makes

them look rather clumsy. They cannot stand the heat of the plains at all well, and are difficult to tame, but fleet and plucky, hunting well with an English pack.

My neighbour Anthony at Meerpore had some very fine English greyhounds and bulldogs, and many a rattling burst have we had together after the fox or the jackal. Imagine a wide level plain, with one uniform dull covering of rice stubble, save where in the centre a mound rises some two acres in extent, covered with long thatching grass, a few scrubby acacia bushes, and other jungly brushwood. All round the circular horizon are dense forest masses of sombre-looking foliage, save where some clump of palms uprear their stately heads, or the white shining walls of some temple, sacred to Shiva or Khristna, glitter in the sunshine. Far to the left, a sluggish creek winds slowly along through the plain, its banks fringed with acacias and wild rose jungle. On the far bank is a small patch of *Sal* forest jungle, with a thick rank undergrowth of ferns, thistles, and rank grass. As I am slowly riding along I hear a shout in the distance, and looking round behold Anthony advancing at a rapid hand-gallop. His dogs and mine, being old friends, rapidly fraternise, and we determine on a hunt.

"Let's try the old patch, Anthony!"

"All right," and away we go, making straight for the mound. When we reach the grass the syces and keepers hold the hounds at the corners outside, while we ride through the grass urging on the terriers, who, quivering with excitement, utter short barks, and dash here and there among the thick grass, all eager for a find.

"Gone away, gone away!" shouts Anthony, as a fleet fox dashes out, closely followed by "Pincher" and half-a-dozen others. The hounds are slipped, and away go the pack in full pursuit, we on our horses riding along one on each side of the chase. The fox has a good start, but now the hounds are nearing him, when with a sudden whisk he

round the ridge encircling a rice field; the hounds overshoot him, and ere they turn the fox has put the breadth of a good field between himself and his pursuers. He is now making back again for the grass, but encounters some of the terriers who have tailed off behind. With panting chests and lolling tongues, they are pegging stolidly along, when fortune gives them this welcome chance. Redoubling their efforts, they dash at the fox. "Bravo, Tilly, you tumbled him over that time!" But he is up and away again. Dodging, double-turning, and twisting, he has nearly run the gauntlet, and the friendly covert is close at hand, but the hounds are now up again and thirsting for his blood. "Hurrah! Minnie has him!" cries Anthony, and riding up we divest poor Reynard of his brush, pat the dogs, ease the girths for a minute, and then again into the jungle for another beat.

This time a fat old jackal breaks to the left, long before the dogs are up. Yelling to the *mehters* not to slip the hounds, we gather the terriers together, and pound over the stubble and ridges. He is going very leisurely, casting an occasional scared look over his shoulder. "Curly" and "Legs," two of my fastest terriers, are now in full view, they are laying themselves well to the ground, and Master Jackal thinks it's high time to increase his pace. He puts on a spurt, but condition tells. He is fat and pursy, and must have had a good feed last night on some poor dead bullock. He is showing his teeth now. Curly makes his rush, and they both roll over together. Up hurries Legs, and the jackal gets a grip, gives him a shake, and then hobbles slowly on. The two terriers now hamper him terribly. One minute they are at his heels, and as soon as he turns, they are at his ear or shoulder. The rest of the pack are fast coming up.

Anthony has a magnificent bulldog, broad-chested, and a Goliath among dogs. He is called "Sailor." "Sailor" bounds along at the same steady pace; he never

seems to get flurried. Sitting lazily at the door, he seems too indolent even to snap at a fly. He is a true philosopher, and nought seems to disturb his serenity. But see him after a jackal, his big red tongue hanging out, his eyes flashing fire, and his hair erected on his back like the bristles of a wild boar. He looks fiendish then, and he is a true bulldog. There is no flinching with "Sailor." Once he gets his grip it's no use trying to make him let go.

Up comes "Sailor" now.

He has the jackal by the throat.

A hoarse, rattling, gasping yell, and the jackal has gone to the happy hunting grounds.

The sun is now mounting in the sky. The hounds and terriers feel the heat, so sending them home by the keeper, we diverge on our respective roads, ride over our cultivation, seeing the ploughing and preparations generally, till hot, tired, and dusty, we reach home about 11.30, tumble into our bath, and feeling refreshed, sit down contentedly to breakfast. If the *dak* or postman has come in we get our letters and papers, and the afternoon is devoted to office work and accounts, hearing complaints and reports from the villages, or looking over any labour that may be going on in the zeraats or at the workshops. In the evening we ride over the zeraats again, give orders for the morrow's work, consume a little tobacco, have an early dinner, and after a little reading retire soon to bed to dream of far-away friends and the happy memories of home. Many an evening it is very lonely work. No friendly face, and no congenial society within miles of your factory. Little wonder that the arrival of a brother planter sends a thrill through the frame, and that his advent is welcomed as the most agreeable break to the irksome monotony of our ofttimes lonely life.

CHAPTER VI.

Fishing in India—Hereditary trades—The boatmen and fishermen of India—Their villages—Nets—Modes of fishing—Curiosities relating thereto—Catching an alligator with a hook—Exciting capture—Crocodiles—Shooting an alligator—Death of the man-eater.

Not only in the wild jungles, on the undulating plains, and among the withered brown stubbles, does animal life abound in India; but the rivers, lakes, and creeks teem with fish of every conceivable size, shape, and colour. The varieties are legion. From the huge black porpoise, tumbling through the turgid stream of the Ganges, to the bright, sparkling, silvery shoals of delicate *chillooahs* or *poteeahs*, which one sees darting in and out among the rice stubbles in every paddy field during the rains. Here a huge *bhowarree* (pike), or ravenous *coira*, comes to the surface with a splash; there a *raho*, the Indian salmon, with its round sucker-like mouth, rises slowly to the surface, sucks in a fly and disappears as slowly as it rose; or a *pachgutchea*, a long sharp-nosed fish, darts rapidly by; a shoal of mullet with their heads out of the water swim athwart the stream, and far down in the cool depths of the tank or lake, a thousand different varieties disport themselves among the mazy labyrinths of the broad-leaved weeds.

During the middle and about the end of the rains, is the [illegible]t time for fishing; the whole country is then a perfect [illegible]rk of streams. Every rice field is a shallow lake, with [illegible]s thousands of tiny fish darting here and there

among the rice stalks. Every ditch teems with fish, and every hollow in every field is a well-stocked aquarium.

Round the edge of every lake or tank in the early morning, or when the fierce heat of the day begins to get tempered by the approaching shades of evening, one sees numbers of boys and men of the poorer classes, each with a couple of rough bamboo rods stuck in the ground in front of him, watching his primitive float with the greatest eagerness, and whipping out at intervals some luckless fish of about three or four ounces in weight with a tremendous haul, fit for the capture of a forty-pounder. They get a coarse sort of hook in the bazaar, rig up a roughly-twisted line, tie on a small piece of hollow reed for a float, and with a lively earth-worm for a bait, they can generally manage in a very short time to secure enough fish for a meal.

With a short light rod, a good silk line, and an English hook attached to fine gut, I have enjoyed many a good hour's sport at Parewah. I used to have a cane chair sent down to the bank of the stream, a *punkah,* or hand fan, plenty of cooling drinks, and two coolie boys in attendance to remove the fish, renew baits, and keep the punkah in constant swing. There I used to sit enjoying my cigar, and pulling in little fish at the rate sometimes of a couple a minute.

I remember hooking a turtle once, and a terrible job it was to land him. My light rod bent like a willow, but the tackle was good, and after ten minutes' hard work I got the turtle to the side, where my boys soon secured him. He weighed thirteen pounds. Sometimes you get among a colony of freshwater crabs. They are little brown brutes, and strip your hooks of the bait as fast as you fling them in. There is nothing for it in such a case but to shift your station. Many of the bottom fish—the *ghurai,* the *saoul,* the *bamee* (eel), and others—make no effort to escape hook. You see them resting at the bottom, and

bait at their very nose. On the whole, the hand fishing is uninteresting, but it serves to while away an odd hour when hunting and shooting are hardly practicable.

Particular occupations in India are restricted to particular castes. All trades are hereditary. For example, a *tatmah*, or weaver, is always a weaver. He cannot become a blacksmith or carpenter. He has no choice. He must follow the hereditary trade. The peculiar system of land-tenure in India, which secures as far as possible a bit of land for every one, tends to perpetuate this hereditary selection of trades, by enabling every cultivator to be so far independent of his handicraft, thus restricting competition. There may be twenty *lohars*, or blacksmiths, in a village, but they do not all follow their calling. They till their lands, and are *de facto* petty farmers. They know the rudiments of their handicraft, but the actual blacksmith's work is done by the hereditary smith of the village, whose son in turn will succeed him when he dies, or if he leave no son, his fellow caste men will put in a successor.

Nearly every villager during the rains may be found on the banks of the stream or lake, angling in an amateur sort of way, but the fishermen of the Behar *par excellence* are the *mullahs*; they are also called *Gonhree*, *Been*, or *Muchooah*. In Bengal they are called *Nikaree*, and in some parts *Baeharee*, from the Persian word for a boat. In the same way *muchooah* is derived from *much*, a fish, and *mullah* means boatman, strictly speaking, rather than fisherman. All boatmen and fishermen belong to this caste, and their villages can be recognised at once by the instruments of their calling lying all around.

Perched high on some bank overlooking the stream or lake, you see innumerable festoons of nets hanging out to dry on tall bamboo poles, or hanging like lace curtains of coarse texture from the roofs and eaves of the huts. Up on the beach are a whole fleet of boats of different

sizes, from the small *dugout*, which will hold only one man, to the huge *dinghy*, in which the big nets and a dozen men can be stowed with ease. Great heaps of shells of the fresh-water mussel, show the source of great supplies of bait; while overhead, a great hovering army of kites and vultures are constantly circling round, eagerly watching for the slightest scrap of offal from the nets. When the rains have fairly set in, and the fishermen have got their rice fields all planted out, they are at liberty to follow their hereditary avocation. A day is fixed for a drag, and the big nets are overhauled and got in readiness. The head *mullah*, a wary, grizzled old veteran, gives the orders. The big drag-net is bundled into the boat, which is quickly pushed off into the stream, and at a certain distance from shore the net is cast from the boat. Being weighted at the lower end, it rapidly sinks, and, buoyed on the upper side with pieces of cork, it makes a perpendicular wall in the water. Several long bamboo poles are now run through the ropes along the upper side of the net, to prevent the net being dragged under water altogether by the weight of the fish in a great haul. The little boats, a crowd of which are in attendance, now dart out, surrounding the net on all sides, and the boatmen beating their oars on the sides of the boats, create such a clatter as to frighten the fish into the circumference of the big net. This is now being dragged slowly to shore by strong and willing arms. The women and children watch eagerly on the bank. At length the glittering haul is pulled up high and dry on the beach, the fish are divided among the men, the women fill their baskets, and away they hie to the nearest bazaar, or if it be not *bazaar* or market day, they hawk the fish through the nearest villages, like our fish-wives at home.

There is another common mode of fishing adopted in narrow lakes and small streams, which are let out to fishermen by the Zemindars or landholders. A b[illegible]

made of light reeds, all matted together by string, is stuck into the stream, and a portion of the water is fenced in, generally in a circular form. The reed fence being quite flexible is gradually moved in, narrowing the circle. As the circle narrows, the agitation inside is indescribable; fish jumping in all directions—a moving mass of glittering scales and fins. The larger ones try to leap the barrier, and are caught by the attendant *mullahs*, who pounce on them with swift dexterity. Eagles and kites dart and swoop down, bearing off a captive fish in their talons. The reed fence is doubled back on itself, and gradually pushed on till the whole of the fish inside are jammed together in a moving mass. The weeds and dirt are then removed, and the fish put into baskets and carried off to market.

Others, again, use circular casting nets, which they throw with very great dexterity. Gathering the net into a bunch they rest it on the shoulder, then with a circular sweep round the head, they fling it far out. Being loaded, it sinks down rapidly in the water. A string is attached to the centre of the net, and the fisherman hauls it in with whatever prey he may be lucky enough to secure.

As the waters recede during October, after the rains have ended, each runlet and purling stream becomes a scene of slaughter on a most reckless and improvident scale. The innumerable shoals of spawn and small fish that have been feeding in the rice fields, warned by some instinct, seek the lakes and main streams. As they try to get their way back, however, they find at each outlet in each ditch and field a deadly wicker trap, in the shape of a square basket with a V-shaped opening leading into it, through which the stream makes its way. After entering this basket there is no egress except through the narrow opening, and they are trapped [illegible]us in countless thousands. Others of the natives in mere [illegible]tonness put a shelf of reeds or rushes in the bed of the [illegible] with an upward slope. As the water rushes along,

the little fish are left high and dry on this shelf or screen, and the water runs off below. In this way scarcely a fish escapes, and as millions are too small to be eaten, it is a most serious waste. The attention of Government has been directed to the subject, and steps may be taken to stop such a reckless and wholesale destruction of a valuable food supply.

In some parts of Purneah and Bhaugulpore I have seen a most ingenious method adopted by the *mullahs*. A gang of four or five enter the stream and travel slowly downwards, stirring up the mud at the bottom with their feet. The fish, ascending the stream to escape the mud, get entangled in the weeds. The fishermen feel them with their feet amongst the weeds, and immediately pounce on them with their hands. Each man has a *gila* or earthen pot attached by a string to his waist and floating behind him in the water. I have seen four men fill their earthen pots in less than an hour by this ingenious but primitive mode of fishing. Some of them can use their feet almost as well for grasping purposes as their hands.

Another mode of capture is by a small net. A flat piece of netting is spread over a hoop, to which four or five pieces of bamboo are attached, rising up and meeting in the centre, so as to form a sort of miniature skeleton tent-like frame over the net. The hoop with the net stretched tight across is then pressed down flat on the bottom of the tank or stream. If any fish are beneath, their efforts to escape agitate the net. The motion is communicated to the fisherman by a string from the centre of the net which is rolled round the fisherman's thumb. When the jerking of his thumb announces a captive fish, he puts down his left hand and secures his victim. The *Banturs, Nepaulees,* and other jungle tribes, also often use the bow and arrow as a means of securing fish.

Seated on the branch of some overhanging tree, while his keen eye scans the depths below, he watches for a large

and as it passes, he lets fly his arrow with unerring aim, and impales the luckless victim. Some tribes fish at night, by torchlight, spearing the fish who are attracted by the light. In Nepaul the bark of the *Hill Sirees* is often used to poison a stream or piece of water. Pounded up and thrown in, it seems to have some uncommon effect on the fish. After water has been treated in this way, the fish, seemingly quite stupefied, rise to the surface, on which they float in great numbers, and allow themselves to be caught. The strangest part of it is that they are perfectly innocuous as food, notwithstanding this treatment.

Fish forms a very favourite article of diet with both Mussulmans and Hindoos. Many of the latter take a vow to touch no flesh of any kind. They are called *Kunthees* or *Baghuts*, but a *Baghut* is more of an ascetic than a *Kunthee*. However, the *Kunthee* is glad of a fish dinner when he can get it. They are restricted to no particular sect or caste, but all who have taken the vow wear a peculiar necklace, made generally of sandal-wood beads or *neem* beads round their throats. Hence the name, from *kunth*, meaning the throat.

The right to fish in any particular piece of water is let out by the proprietor on whose land the water lies, or through which it flows. The letting is generally done by auction yearly. The fishing is called a *shilkur*, from *shal*, a net. It is generally taken by some rich *Bunneah* (grain seller) or village banker, who sublets it in turn to the fishermen.

In some of the tanks which are not so let, and where the native proprietor preserves the fish, first-class sport can be had. A common native poaching dodge is this: if some oil cake be thrown into the water a few hours previous to your fishing, or better still, balls made of roasted linseed meal, mixed with bruised leaves of the 'sweet basil,' or *toolsee* plant, the fish assemble in hundreds round the spot, and devour the bait greedily. With a good eighteen-foot rod, from twelve to twenty pounds are not uncommonly

caught, and will give good play too. Fishing in the plains of India, is, however, rather tame sport at the best of times.

You have heard of the famous *mahseer*—some of them over eighty or a hundred pounds weight? We have none of these in Behar, but the huge porpoise gives splendid rifle or carbine practice as he rolls through the turgid streams. They are difficult to hit, but I have seen several killed with ball; and the oil extracted from their bodies is a splendid dressing for harness. But the most exciting fishing I have ever seen was—what do you think?—Alligator fishing! Yes, the formidable scaly monster, with his square snout and terrible jaws, his ponderous body covered with armour, and his serrated tail, with which he could break the leg of a bullock, or smash an outrigger as easily as a whale could smash a jolly boat.

I must try to describe one day's alligator fishing.

When I was down in Bhaugulpore, I went out frequently fishing in the various tanks and streams near my factory. My friend Pat, who is a keen sportsman and very fond of angling, wrote to me one day when he and his brother Willie were going out to the Teljuga, asking me to join their party. The Teljuga is the boundary stream between Tirhoot and Bhaugulpore, and its sluggish, muddy waters teem with alligators—the regular square-nosed *mugger*, the terrible man-eater. The *nakar* or long-nosed species may be seen in countless numbers in any of the large streams, stretched out on the banks basking in the noonday sun. Going down the Koosee particularly, you come across hundreds sometimes lying on one bank. As the boat nears them, they slide noiselessly and slowly into the stream. A large excrescence forms on the tip of the long snout, like a huge sponge; and this is often all that is seen on the surface of the water as the hu[illegible] brute swims about waiting for his prey. These *nakar*[illegible] long-nosed specimens, never attack human beings—[illegible] such cases are very very rare—but live almost entirel[illegible]

I remember seeing one catch a paddy-bird on one occasion near the junction of the Koosee with the Ganges. My boat was fastened to the shore near a slimy creek that came oozing into the river from some dense jungle near. I was washing my hands and face on the bank, and the boatmen were fishing with a small hand-net, for our breakfast. Numbers of attenuated melancholy-looking paddy-birds were stalking solemnly and stiltedly along the bank, also fishing for *theirs*. I noticed one who was particularly greedy, with his long legs half immersed in the water, constantly darting out his long bill and bringing up a hapless struggling fish. All of a sudden a long snout and the ugly serrated ridgy back of a *nakar* was shot like lightning at the hapless bird, and right before our eyes the poor paddy was crunched up. As a rule, however, alligators confine themselves to a fish diet, and are glad of any refuse or dead animal that may float their way. But with the *mugger*, the *boach*, or square-nosed variety, "all is fish that comes to his net." His soul delights in young dog or live pork. A fat duck comes not amiss; and impelled by hunger he hesitates not to attack man. Once regaled with the flavour of human flesh, he takes up his stand near some ferry, or bathing ghaut, where many hapless women and children often fall victims to his unholy appetite, before his career is cut short.

I remember shooting one ghastly old scaly villain in a tank near Ryseree. He had made this tank his home, and with that fatalism which is so characteristic of the Hindoo, the usual ablutions and bathings went on as if no such monster existed. Several women having been carried off, however, at short intervals, the villagers asked me to try and rid them of their foe. I took a ride down to the tank one [illegible]day morning, and found the banks a scene of great [illegible]ment. A woman had been carried off some hours [illegible]s she was filling her water jar, and the monster was

now reposing at the bottom of the tank digesting his horrible meal. The tank was covered with crimson water-lilies in full bloom, their broad brown and green leaves showing off the crimson beauty of the open flower. At the north corner some wild rose bushes drooped over the water, casting a dense matted shade. Here was the haunt of the *mugger*. He had excavated a gloomy-looking hole, into which he retired when gorged with prey. My first care was to cut away some of these bushes, and then, finding he was not at home, we drove some bamboo stakes through the bank to prevent him getting into his *Maun*, which is what the natives term the den or hole. I then sat down under a *goolar* tree to wait for his appearance. The *goolar* is a species of fig, and the leaves are much relished by cattle and goats. Gradually the village boys and young men went off to their ploughing, or grass cutting for the cows' evening meal. A woman came down occasionally to fill her water-pot in evident fear and trembling. A swarm of *minas* (the Indian starling) hopped and twittered round my feet. The cooing of a pair of amatory pigeons overhead nearly lulled me to slumber. A flock of green parrots came swiftly circling overhead, making for the fig-tree at the south end of the tank. An occasional *raho* lazily rose among the water-lilies, and disappeared with an indolent flap of his tail. The brilliant kingfisher, resplendent in crimson and emerald, sat on the withered branch of a prostrate mango-tree close by, pluming his feathers and doubtless meditating on the vanity of life. Suddenly, close by the massive post which marks the centre of every Hindoo tank, a huge scaly snout slowly and almost imperceptibly rose to the surface, then a broad, flat, forbidding forehead, topped by two grey fishy eyes with warty-looking callosities for eyebrows. Just then an eager urchin who had been squatted by me for hours pointed to the brute. It was enough. Down sank the loathsome creature, and we had to resume our attitude

expectation and patient waiting. Another hour passed slowly. It was the middle of the afternoon, and very hot. I had sent my *tokedar* off for a "peg" to the factory, and was beginning to get very drowsy, when, right in the same spot, the repulsive head again rose slowly to the surface. I had my trusty No. 12 to my shoulder on the instant, glanced carefully along the barrels, but just then only the eyes of the brute were visible. A moment of intense excitement followed, and then, emboldened by the extreme stillness, he showed his whole head above the surface. I pulled the trigger, and a Meade shell crashed through the monster's skull, scattering his brains in the water and actually sending one splinter of the skull to the opposite edge of the tank, where my little Hindoo boy picked it up and brought it to me.

There was a mighty agitation in the water; the water-lilies rocked to and fro, and the broad leaves glittered with the water drops thrown on them; then all was still. Hearing the report of my gun, the natives came flocking to the spot, and, telling them their enemy was slain, I departed, leaving instructions to let me know when the body came to the surface. It did so three days later. Getting some *chumars* and *domes* (two of the lowest castes, as none of the higher castes will touch a dead body under pain of losing caste), we hauled the putrid carcase to shore, and on cutting it open, found the glass armlets and brass ornaments of no less than five women and the silver ornaments of three children, all in a lump in the brute's stomach. Its skull was completely smashed and shattered to pieces by my shot. Its teeth were crusted with tartar, and worn almost to the very stumps. It measured nineteen feet.

But during this digression my friends Pat and Willie have [illegible] waiting on the banks of the "Teljuga." I reached [illegible]ents late at night, found them both in high spirits [illegible]od day's execution among the ducks and teal, and

preparations being made for catching an alligator next day. Up early in the morning, we beat some grass close by the stream, and roused out an enormous boar that gave us a three mile spin and a good fight, after Pat had given him first spear. After breakfast we got our tackle ready.

This was a large iron hook with a strong shank, to which was attached a stout iron ring. To this ring a long thick rope was fastened, and I noticed for several yards the strands were all loose and detached, and only knotted at intervals. I asked Pat the reason of this curious arrangement, and was told that if we were lucky enough to secure a *mugger*, the loose strands would entangle themselves amongst his formidable teeth, whereas were the rope in one strand only he might bite it through; the knottings at intervals were to give greater strength to the line. We now got our bait ready. On this occasion it was a live tame duck. Passing the bend of the hook round its neck, and the shank under its right wing, we tied the hook in this position with thread. We then made a small raft of the soft pith of the plantain-tree, tied the duck to the raft and committed it to the stream. Holding the rope as clear of the water as we could, the poor quacking duck floated slowly down the muddy current, making an occasional vain effort to get free. We saw at a distance an ugly snout rise to the surface for an instant and then noiselessly disappear.

"There's one!" says Pat in a whisper.

"Be sure and not strike too soon," says Willie.

"Look out there, you lazy rascals!" This in Hindostanee to the grooms and servants who were with us.

Again the black mass rises to the surface, but this time nearer to the fated duck. As if aware of its peril it now struggles and quacks most vociferously. Nearer and nearer each time the black snout rises, and then each time silently disappears beneath the turgid muddy stream. Now it appears again; this time there are two, and there is

at a distance attracted by the quacking of the duck. We on the bank cower down and go as noiselessly as we can. Sometimes the rope dips on the water, and the huge snout and staring eyes immediately disappear. At length it rises within a few yards of the duck; then there is a mighty rush, two huge jaws open and shut with a snap like factory shears, and amid a whirl of foam and water and surging mud the poor duck and the hideous reptile disappear, and but for the eddying swirl and dense volumes of mud that rise from the bottom, nothing gives evidence of the tragedy that has been enacted. The other two disappointed monsters swim to and fro still further disturbing the muddy current.

"Give him lots of time to swallow," yells Pat, now fairly mad with excitement.

The grooms and grass-cutters howl and dance. Willie and I dig each other in the ribs, and all generally act in an excited and insane way.

Pat now puts the rope over his shoulder, we all take hold, and with a "one, two, three!" we make a simultaneous rush from the bank, and as the rope suddenly tightens with a pull and strain that nearly jerks us all on our backs, we feel that we have hooked the monster, and our excitement reaches its culminating point.

What a commotion now in the black depths of the muddy stream! The water, lashed by his powerful tail, surges and dashes in eddying whirls. He rises and darts backwards and forwards, snapping his horrible jaws, moving his head from side to side, his eyes glaring with fury. We hold stoutly on to the rope, although our wrists are strained and our arms ache. At length he begins to feel our steady pull, and inch by inch, struggling demoniacally, he nears the bank. When once he reaches it, however, the united efforts of twice our number would fail to bring him farther. [illegible]g and foaming at the mouth, his horrid teeth [illegible] amid the frothy, blood-flecked foam, he plants his

strong curved fore-legs against the shelving bank, and tugs and strains at the rope with devilish force and fury. It is no use—the rope has been tested, and answers bravely to the strain; and now with a long boar spear, Pat cautiously descends the bank, and gives him a deadly thrust under the fore arm. With a last fiendish glare of hate and defiance, he springs forward; we haul in the rope, Pat nimbly jumps back, and a pistol shot through the eye settles the monster for ever. This was the first alligator I ever saw hooked; he measured sixteen and a half feet exactly, but words can give no idea of half the excitement that attended the capture.

CHAPTER VII.

Native superstitions—Charming a bewitched woman—Exorcising ghosts from a field—Witchcraft—The witchfinder or "Ojah"—Influence of fear—Snake bites—How to cure them—How to discover a thief—Ghosts and their habits—The "Haddick" or native bone-setter—Cruelty to animals by natives.

THE natives as a rule, and especially the lower classes, are excessively superstitious. They are afraid to go out after nightfall, believing that then the spirits of the dead walk abroad. It is almost impossible to get a coolie, or even a fairly intelligent servant, to go a message at night, unless you give him another man for company.

A belief in witches is quite prevalent, and there is scarcely a village in Behar that does not contain some withered old crone, reputed and firmly believed to be a witch. Others either young or old are believed to have the evil eye; and, as in Scotland some centuries ago, there are also witchfinders and sorcerers, who will sell charms, cast nativities, give divinations, or ward off the evil efforts of wizards and witches by powerful spells. When a wealthy man has a child born the Brahmins cast the nativity of the infant on some auspicious day. They fix on the name, and settle the day for the baptismal ceremony.

I remember a man coming to me on one occasion from the village of Kuppoorpuckree. He rushed up to where I was sitting in the verandah, threw himself at my feet, with tears streaming down his cheeks, and amid loud cries for pity and help told me that his wife had just been bewitched. Getting

him somewhat soothed and pacified, I learned that a reputed witch lived next door to his house; that she and the man's wife had quarrelled in the morning about some capsicums which the witch was trying to steal from his garden; that in the evening, as his wife was washing herself inside the *angana*, or little courtyard appertaining to his house, she was seized with cramps and shivering fits, and was now in a raging fever; that the witch had also been bathing at the time, and that the water from her body had splashed over this man's fence, and part of it had come in contact with his wife's body—hence undoubtedly this strange possession. He wished me to send peons at once, and have the witch seized, beaten, and expelled from the village. It would have been no use my trying to persuade him that no witchcraft existed. So I gave him a good dose of quinine for his wife, which she was to take as soon as the fit subsided. Next I got my old *moonshee*, or native writer, to write some Persian characters on a piece of paper; I then gave him this paper, muttering a bit of English rhyme at the time, and telling him this was a powerful spell. I told him to take three hairs from his wife's head, and a paring from her thumb and big toe nails, and at the rising of the moon to burn them outside the walls of his hut. The poor fellow took the quinine and the paper with the deepest reverence, made me a most lowly *salaam* or obeisance, and departed with a light heart. He carried out my instructions to the letter, the quinine acted like a charm on the feverish woman, and I found myself quite a famous witch-doctor.

There was a nice flat little field close to the water at Parewah, in which I thought I could get a good crop of oats during the cold weather. I sent for the "dangur" mates, and asked them to have it dug up next day. They hummed and hawed and hesitated, as I thought, in rather a strange manner, but departed. In the evening back they came to tell me that the dangurs would not dig up the field.

"Why?" I asked

"Well you see, Sahib," said old Teerbouan, who was the patriarch and chief spokesman of the village, "this field has been used for years as a burning ghaut" (i.e. a place where the bodies of dead Hindoos were buried).

"Well?" said I.

"Well, Sahib, my men say that if they disturb this land, the 'Bhoots' (ghosts) of all those who have been burned there, will haunt the village at night, and they hope you will not persist in asking them to dig up the land."

"Very well, bring down the men with their digging hoes, and I will see."

Accordingly, next morning, I went down on my pony, found the dangurs all assembled, but no digging going on. I called them together, told them that it was a very reasonable fear they had, but that I would cast such a spell on the land as would settle the ghosts of the departed for ever. I then got a branch of a *bael** tree that grew close by, dipped it in the stream, and walking backwards round the ground, waved the dripping branch round my head, repeating at the same time the first gibberish that came into my recollection. My incantation or spell was as follows, an old Scotch rhyme I had often repeated when a child at school—

"Eenerty, feenerty, fickerty, feg,
Ell, dell, domun's egg;
Irky, birky, story, rock,
An, tan, toose, Jock;
Black fish! white troot!
'Gibbie Gaw, ye're oot.'"

* The *bael* or wood-apple is a sacred wood with Hindoos. It is enjoined in the Shastras that the bodies of the dead should be consumed in a fire fed by logs of bael-tree; but where it is not procurable in sufficient quantity, the natives compound with their consciences by burning the funeral pyre with a branch from the bael-tree. It is a fine yellow coloured, pretty durable wood, and makes excellent furniture. A delicious sherbet can be made from the fruit, which acts as an excellent astringent and stomachic.

It had the desired effect. No sooner was my charm uttered, than, after a few encouraging words to the men, telling them that there was now no fear, that my charm was powerful enough to lay all the spirits in the country, and that I would take all the responsibility, they set to work with a will, and had the whole field dug up by the evening.

I have seen many such cases. A blight attacks the melon or cucumber beds; a fierce wind rises during the night, and shakes half the mangoes off the trees; the youngest child is attacked with teething convulsions; the plough-bullock is accidentally lamed, or the favourite cow refuses to give milk. In every case it is some 'Dyne,' or witch, that has been at work with her damnable spells and charms. I remember a case in which a poor little child had bad convulsions. The 'Ojah,' or witchfinder, in this case a fat, greasy, oleaginous knave, was sent for. Full of importance and blowing like a porpoise, he came and caused the child to be brought to him, under a tree near the village. I was passing at the time, and stopped out of curiosity. He spread a tattered cloth in front of him, and muttered some unintelligible gibberish, unceasingly making strange passes with his arms. He put down a number of articles on his cloth—which was villainously tattered and greasy—an unripe plantain, a handful of rice, of parched peas, a thigh bone, two wooden cups, some balls, &c., &c.; all of which he kept constantly lifting and moving about, keeping up the passes and muttering all the time.

The child was a sickly-looking, pining sort of creature, rocking about in evident pain, and moaning and fretting just as sick children do. Gradually its attention got fixed on the strange antics going on. The Ojah kept muttering away quicker and quicker, constantly shifting the bon[illegible] and cups and other articles on the cloth. His body [illegible] suffused with perspiration, but in about half an ho[illegible]

old women, and the anxious father, was borne off in triumph to the house.

Another time one of Mr. D.'s female servants got bitten by a scorpion. The poor woman was in great agony, with her arm swelled up, when an Ojah was called in. Setting her before him, he began his incantations in the usual manner, but made frequent passes over her body, and over the bitten place. A gentle perspiration began to break out on her skin, and in a very short time the Ojah had thrown her into a deep mesmeric sleep. After about an hour she awoke perfectly free from pain. In this case no doubt the Ojah was a mesmerist.

The influence of fear on the ordinary native is most wonderful. I have known dozens of instances in which natives have been brought home at night for treatment in cases of snake-bite. They have arrived at the factory in a complete state of coma, with closed eyes, the pupils turned back in the head, the whole body rigid and cold, the lips pale white, and the tongue firmly locked between the teeth. I do not believe in recovery from a really poisonous bite, where the venom has been truly injected. I invariably asked first how long it was since the infliction of the bite; I would then examine the marks, and as a rule would find them very slight. When the patient had been brought some distance, I knew at once that it was a case of pure fright. The natives wrap themselves up in their cloths or blankets at night, and lie down on the floors of their huts. Turning about, or getting up for water or tobacco, or perhaps to put fuel on the fire, they unluckily tread on a snake, or during sleep they roll over on one. The snake gives them a nip, and scuttles off. They have not seen what sort of snake it is, but their imagination conjures up the very worst. After the first [illegible]tery, when the whole house is alarmed, the man sits down [illegible]y possessed by the idea that he is mortally bitten. [illegible]lly his fears work the effect a real poisonous bite

would produce. His eye gets dull, his pulse grows feeble, his extremities cold and numb, and unless forcibly roused by the bystanders he will actually succumb to pure fright, not to the snake-bite at all. My chief care when a case of this sort was brought me, was to assume a cheery demeanour, laugh to scorn the fears of the relatives, and tell them he would be all right in a few hours, if they attended to my directions. This not uncommonly worked by sympathetic influence on the patient himself. I believe, so long as all around him thought he was going to die, and expected no other result, the same effect was produced on his own mind. As soon as hope sprang up in the breasts of all around him, his spirit also caught the contagion. As a rule, he would now make an effort to articulate. I would then administer a good dose of sal volatile, brandy, eau-de-luce, or other strong stimulant, cut into the supposed bite, and apply strong nitric acid to the wound. This generally made him wince, and I would hail it as a token of certain recovery. By this time some confidence would return, and the supposed dying man would soon walk back sound and whole among his companions after profuse expressions of gratitude to his preserver.

I have treated dozens of cases in this way successfully, and only seen two deaths. One was a young woman, my chowkeydar's daughter; the other was an old man, who was already dead when they lifted him out of the basket in which they had slung him. I do not wish to be misunderstood. I believe that in all these cases of recovery it was pure fright working on the imagination, and not snake-bite at all. My opinion is shared by most planters, that there is no cure yet known for a cobra bite, or for that of any other poisonous snake, where the poison has once been fairly injected and allowed to mix with the blood.*

* Deaths from actual snake-bite are sadly numerous; but it is from returns furnished to the Indian Government that Europ[illegible]

There is another curious instance of the effects of fear on the native mind in the common method taken by an Ojah or Brahmin to discover a suspected thief. When a theft occurs, the Ojah is sent for, and the suspected parties are brought together. After various *muntras*, i.e. charms or incantations, have been muttered, the Ojah, who has meanwhile narrowly scrutinized each countenance, gives each of the suspected individuals a small quantity of dry rice to chew. If the thief be present, his superstitious fears are at work, and his conscience accuses him. He sees some terrible retribution for him in all these *muntras*, and his heart becomes like water within him, his tongue gets dry, his salivary glands refuse to act; the innocent munch away at their rice contentedly, but the guilty wretch feels as if he had ashes in his mouth. At a given signal all spit out their rice, and he whose rice comes out, chewed indeed, but dry as summer dust, is adjudged the thief. This ordeal is called *chowl chipao*, and is rarely unsuccessful. I have known several cases in my own experience in which a thief has been thus discovered.

The *bhoots*, or ghosts, are popularly supposed to have

---

a very happy exemption. During the last forty years it would seem that only two Europeans have been killed by snake-bite, at least only two well substantiated cases. The poorer classes are the most frequent victims. Their universal habit of walking about unshod, and sleeping on the ground, penetrating into the grasses or jungles in pursuit of their daily avocations, no doubt conduces much to the frequency of such accidents. A good plan to keep snakes out of the bungalow is to leave a space all round the rooms, of about four inches, between the wall and the edge of the mats. Have this washed over about once a week with a strong solution of carbolic acid and water. The smell may be unpleasant for a short time, but it proves equally so to the snakes; and I have proved by experience that it keeps them out of the rooms. Mats should also be all firmly fastened down to the floor with bamboo battens, and furniture should be often moved, and kept raised a little from the ground, and the space below carefully swept every day. At night a light should always be kept burning in occupied bedrooms, and on no account should one get into bed in the dark, or walk about the rooms at night without slippers

favourite haunts, generally in some specially selected tree; the *neem* tree is supposed to be the most patronised. The most intelligent natives share this belief with the poorest and most ignorant; they fancy the ghosts throw stones at them, cast evil influences over them, lure them into quicksands, and play other devilish tricks and cantrips. Some roads are quite shunned and deserted at night, for no other reason than that a ghost is supposed to haunt the place. The most tempting bribe would not make a native walk alone over that road after sunset.

Besides the witch-finder, another important village functionary who relies much on muntras and charms, is the *Huddick*, or cow doctor. He is the only veterinary surgeon of the native when his cow or bullock dislocates or breaks a limb, or falls ill. The Huddick passes his hands over the affected part, and mutters his *muntras*, which have most probably descended to him from his father. Usually knowing a little of the anatomical structure of the animal, he may be able to reduce a dislocation, or roughly to set a fracture; but if the ailment be internal, a draught of mustard oil, or some pounded spices and turmeric, or neem leaves administered along with the *muntra*, are supposed to be all that human skill and science can do.

The natives are cruel to animals. Half-starved bullocks are shamefully overworked. When blows fail to make the ill-starred brute move, they give a twist and wrench to the tail, which must cause the animal exquisite torture, and unless the hapless beast be utterly exhausted, this generally induces it to make a further effort. Ploughmen very often deliberately make a raw open sore, one on each rump of the plough-bullock. They goad the poor wretch on this raw sore with a sharp-pointed stick when he lags or when they think he needs stirring up. Ponies, too, are always worked far too young; and their miserable legs get frightfully twisted and bent. The petty shopkeepers sellers

pots, grain, spices, and other bazaar wares, who attend the various bazaars, or weekly and bi-weekly markets, transport their goods by means of these ponies.

The packs of merchandise are slung on rough pack-saddles, made of coarse sacking. Shambling along with knees bent together, sores on every joint, and frequently an eye knocked out, the poor pony's back gets cruelly galled; when the bazaar is reached, he is hobbled as tightly as possible, the coarse ropes cutting into the flesh, and he is then turned adrift to contemplate starvation on the burnt-up grass. Great open sores form on the back, on which a plaister of moist clay, or cowdung and pounded leaves, is roughly put. The wretched creature gets worn to a skeleton. A little common care and cleanliness would put him right, with a little kindly consideration from his brutal master, but what does the *Kulwar* or *Bunneah* care? he is too lazy.

This unfeeling cruelty and callous indifference to the sufferings of the lower animals is a crying evil, and every magistrate, European, and educated native, might do much to ease their burdens. Tremendous numbers of bullocks and ponies die from sheer neglect and ill-treatment every year. It is now becoming so serious a trouble, that in many villages plough-bullocks are too few in number for the area of land under cultivation. The tillage suffers, the crops deteriorate, this reacts on prices, the ryot sinks lower and lower, and gets more into the grasp of the rapacious money-lender. In many villages I have seen whole tracts of land relapsed into *purtee*, or untilled waste, simply from want of bullocks to draw the plough. Severe epidemics, like foot and mouth disease and pleuro, occasionally sweep off great numbers; but, I repeat, that annually the lives of hundreds valuable animals are sacrificed by sheer sloth, dirt, in- ion, and brutal cruelty.

e parts of India, cattle poisoning for the sake of

the hides is extensively practised. The *Chumars*, that is, the shoemakers, furriers, tanners, and workers in leather and skins generally, frequently combine together in places, and wilfully poison cattle and buffaloes. There is actually a section in the penal code taking cognisance of the crime. The Hindoo will not touch a dead carcase, so that when a bullock mysteriously sickens and dies, the *Chumars* haul away the body, and appropriate the skin. Some luckless witch is blamed for the misfortune, when the rascally Chumars themselves are all the while the real culprits. The police, however, are pretty successful in detecting this crime, and it is not now of such frequent occurrence.*

Highly as the pious Hindoo venerates the sacred bull of Shiva, his treatment of his mild patient beasts of burden is a foul blot on his character. Were you to shoot a cow, or were a Mussulman to wound a stray bullock which might have trespassed, and be trampling down his opium or his tobacco crop, and ruining his fields, the Hindoos would rise *en masse* to revenge the insult offered to their religion. Yet they scruple not to goad their bullocks, beat them, half starve them, and let their gaping wounds fester and become corrupt. When the poor brute becomes old and unable to work, and his worn-out teeth unfit to graze, he is ruthlessly turned out to die in a ditch, and be torn to pieces by jackals,

* Somewhat analogous to this is the custom which used to be a common one in some parts of Behar. *Koomhars* and *Gramies*, that is, tile-makers and thatchers, when trade was dull or rain impending, would scatter peas and grain in the interstices of the tiles on the houses of the well-to-do. The pigeons and crows, in their efforts to get at the peas, would loosen and perhaps overturn a few of the tiles. The gramie would be sent for to replace these, would condemn the whole roof as leaky, and the tiles as old and unfit for use, and would provide a job for himself and the tile-maker, the nefarious profits of which they would share together.

Cultivators of thatching-grass have been known deliberately and wantonly to set fire to villages simply to raise the price of thatch and bamboo.

kites, and vultures. The higher classes and well-to-do farmers show much consideration for high-priced well-conditioned animals, but when they get old or unwell, and demand redoubled care and attention, they are too often neglected, till, from sheer want of ordinary care, they rot and die.

CHAPTER VIII.

Our annual race meet—The arrivals—The camps—The "ordinary"—The course—"They're off"—The race—The steeple-chase—Incidents of the meet—The ball.

OUR annual Race Meet is the one great occasion of the year when all the dwellers in the district meet. Our races in Chumparun generally took place some time about Christmas. Long before the date fixed on, arrangements would be made for the exercise of hearty hospitality. The residents in the "station" ask as many guests as will fill their houses, and their "compounds" are crowded with tents, each holding a number of visitors, generally bachelors. The principal managers of the factories in the district, with their assistants. form a mess for the racing week, and, not unfrequently, one or two ladies lend their refining presence to the several camps. Friends from other districts, from up-country, from Calcutta, gather together; and as the weather is bracing and cool, and everyone determined to enjoy himself, the meet is one of the pleasantest of reunions. There are always several races specially got up for assistants' horses, and long prior to the meet, the youngsters are up in the early morning, giving their favourite nag a spin across the zeraats, or seeing the groom lead him out swathed in clothing and bandages, to get him into training for the Assistants' race.

As the day draws near, great cases of tinned m[illegible] hampers of beer and wine, and goodly supplies of a[illegible] are sent into the station to the various camps.

snowy white canvas begin to peep out at you from among the trees. Great oblong booths of blue indigo sheeting show where the temporary stables for the horses are being erected; and at night the glittering of innumerable camp-fires betokens the presence of a whole army of grooms, grass-cutters, peons, watchmen, and other servants cooking their evening meal of rice, and discussing the chances of the horses of their respective masters in the approaching races. On the day before the first racing, the planters are up early, and in buggy, dogcart, or on horseback, singly, and by twos and threes, from all sides of the district, they find their way to the station. The Planters' Club is the general rendezvous. The first comers, having found out their waiting servants, and consigned the smoking steeds to their care, seat themselves in the verandah, and eagerly watch every fresh arrival.

Up comes a buggy. "Hullo, who's this?"

"Oh, it's 'Giblets!' How do you do, 'Giblets,' old man?"

Down jumps "Giblets," and a general handshaking ensues.

"Here comes 'Boach' and the 'Moonshee,'" yells out an observant youngster from the back verandah.

The venerable buggy of the esteemed "Boach" approaches, and another jubilation takes place; the handshaking being so vigorous that the "Moonshee's" spectacles nearly come to grief. Now the arrivals ride and drive up fast and furious.

"Hullo, 'Anthony!'"

"Aha, 'Charley,' how d'ye do?"

"By Jove, 'Ferdie,' where have you turned up from?"

"Has the 'Skipper' arrived?"

"Have any of you seen 'Jamie?'"

"Where's big 'Macs'' tents?"

"Have any of ye seen my 'Bearer?'"

"Is the 'Bump' come in?" and so on.

A scene of bustle and excitement. Friends meet that

have not seen each other for a twelvemonth. Queries are exchanged as to absent friends. The chances of the meeting are discussed. Perhaps a passing allusion is made to some dear one who has left our ranks since last meet. All sorts of topics are started, and up till and during breakfast there is a regular medley of tongues, a confused clatter of voices, dishes, and glasses, a pervading atmosphere of dense curling volumes of tobacco smoke.

To a stranger the names sound uncouth and meaningless the fact being, that we all go by nicknames.*

"Giblets," "Diamond Digger," "Mangelwurzel," "Goggle-eyed Plover," "Gossein" or holy man, "Blind Bartimeus," "Old Boots," "Polly," "Bottle-nosed Whale," "Fin Mac-Coul," "Daddy," "The Exquisite," "The Mosquito," "Wee Bob," and "Napoleon," are only a very few specimens of this strange nomenclature. These soubriquets quite usurp our baptismal appellations, and I have often been called Mr. "Maori," by people who did not actually know my real name.

By the evening, all, barring the very late arrivals, have found out their various camps. There is a merry dinner, then each sahib, well muffled in ulster, plaid, or great coat, hies him to the club, where the "ordinary" is to be held. The nights are now cold and foggy, and a tremendous dew falls. At the "ordinary," fresh greetings ensue between those who now meet for the first time after long separation. The entries and bets are made for the morrow's races, although not much betting takes place as a rule; but the lotteries on the different races are rapidly filled, the dice circulate cheerily, and amid laughing, joking, smoking, noise

* In such a limited society every peculiarity is noted; all our antecedents are known; personal predilections and little foibles of character are marked; eccentricities are watched, and no one, let him be as uninteresting as a miller's pig, is allowed to escape observation or remark. Some little peculiarity is hit upon, and a strange but often happily expressive nickname stamps one's individuality and photographs him with a word.

and excitement, there is a good deal of mild speculation. The "horsey" ones visit the stables for the last time; and each retires to his camp bed to dream of the morrow.

Very early, the respective *bearers* rouse the sleepy *sahibs.* Table servants rush hurriedly about the mess tent, bearing huge dishes of tempting viands. Grooms, and *grasscuts* are busy leading the horses off to the course. The cold raw fog of the morning fills every tent, and dim grey figures of cowering natives, wrapped up over the eyes in blankets, with moist blue noses and chattering teeth, are barely discernible in the thick mist.

The racecourse is two miles from the club, on the other side of the lake, in the middle of a grassy plain, with a neat masonry structure at the further side, which serves as a grand stand. Already buggies, dogcarts in single harness and tandem, barouches and waggonettes are merrily rolling through the thick mist, past the frowning jail, and round the corner of the lake. Natives in gaudy coloured shawls, and blankets, are pouring on to the racecourse by hundreds.

Bullock carts, within which are black-eyed, bold beauties, profusely burdened with silver ornaments, are drawn up in lines. *Ekkas*—small jingling vehicles with a dome-shaped canopy and curtains at the sides—drawn by gaily caparisoned ponies, and containing fat, portly Baboos, jingle and rattle over the ruts on the side roads.

Sweetmeat sellers, with trays of horrible-looking filth, made seemingly of insects, clarified butter, and sugar, dodge through the crowd dispensing their abominable-looking but seemingly much relished wares. Tall policemen, with blue jackets, red puggries, yellow belts, and white trousers, stalk up and down with conscious dignity.

A madcap young assistant on his pony comes tearing along s country. The weighing for the first race is going on; are being saddled, some vicious brute occasionally ut, and scattering the crowd behind him. The

ladies are seated round the terraced grand stand; long strings of horses are being led round and round in a circle, by the *syces*; vehicles of every description are lying round the building.

Suddenly a bugle sounds; the judge enters his box; the ever popular old "Bikram," who officiates as starter, ambles off on his white cob, and after him go half-a-dozen handsome young fellows, their silks rustling and flashing through the fast rising mist.

A hundred field-glasses scan the start; all is silent for a moment.

"They're off!" shout a dozen lungs.

"False start!" echo a dozen more.

The gay colours of the riders flicker confusedly in a jumble. One horse careers madly along for half the distance, is with difficulty pulled up, and is then walked slowly back.

The others left at the post fret, and fidget, and curvet about. At length they are again in line. Down goes the white flag! "Good start!" shouts an excited planter. Down goes the red flag. "Off at last!" breaks like a deep drawn sigh from the crowd, and now the six horses, all together, and at a rattling pace, tear up the hill, over the sand at the south corner, and up, till at the quarter mile post "a blanket could cover the lot."

Two or three tails are now showing signals of distress; heels and whips are going. Two horses have shot ahead, a bay and a black. "Jamie" on the bay, "Paddy" on the black.

Still as marble sit those splendid riders, the horses are neck and neck; now the bay by a nose, now again the black. The distance post is passed with a rush like a whirlwind.

"A dead heat, by Jove!"

"Paddy wins!" "Jamie has it!" "Hooray, Pat!" it, Jamie!" "Well ridden!" A subdued hum runs the excited spectators. The ardent racers are nose

One swift, sharp cut, the cruel whip hisses through the air, and the black is fairly "lifted in," a winner by a nose. The ripple of conversation breaks out afresh. The band strikes up a lively air, and the saddling for the next race goes on.

The other races are much the same; there are lots of entries: the horses are in splendid condition, and the riding is superb. What is better, everything is emphatically "on the square." No *pulling* and *roping* here, no false entries, no dodging of any kind. Fine, gallant, English gentlemen meet each other in fair and honest emulation, and enjoy the favourite national sport in perfection. The "Waler" race, for imported Australians, brings out fine, tall, strong-boned, clean-limbed horses, looking blood all over. The country breds, with slender limbs, small heads, and glossy coats, look dainty and delicate as antelopes. The lovely, compact Arabs, the pretty-looking ponies, and the thick-necked, coarse-looking Cabools, all have their respective trials, and then comes the great event—the race of the day—the Steeplechase.

The course is marked out behind the grand stand, following a wide circle outside the flat course, which it enters at the quarter mile post, so that the finish is on the flat before the grand stand. The fences, ditches, and water leap, are all artificial, but they are regular *howlers* and no make-believes.

Seven horses are despatched to a straggling start, and all negotiate the first bank safely. At the next fence a regular *snorter* of a "post and rail"—topped with brushwood—two horses swerve, one rider being deposited on his racing seat upon mother earth, while the other sails away across country in a line for home, and is next heard of at the stables. The remaining five, three "walers" and two country-breds, race together to the water jump, where one waler deposits his rider, and races home by himself, one country-bred refuses, and is [illegible]eforth out of the race, and the other three, taking the leap [illegible]ntiful style, put on racing pace to the next bank, and [illegible] air together. A lovely sight! The country is now

stiff, and the stride of the waler tells. He is leading the country-breds a "whacker," but he stumbles and falls at the last fence but one from home. His gallant rider, the undaunted "Roley," remounts just as the two country-breds pass him like a flash of light. "Nothing venture, nothing win," however, so in go the spurs, and off darts the waler like an arrow in pursuit. He is gaining fast, and tops the last hurdle leading to the straight just as the hoofs of the other two reach the ground.

It is now a matter of pace and good riding. It will be a close finish; the waler is first to feel the whip; there is a roar from the crowd; he is actually leading; whips and spurs are hard at work now; it is a mad, headlong rush; every muscle is strained, and the utmost effort made; the poor horses are doing their very best; amid a thunder of hoofs, clouds of dust, hats in air, waving of handkerchiefs from the grand stand, and a truly British cheer from the paddock, the "waler" shoots in half a length ahead; and so end the morning's races.

Back to camp now, to bathe and breakfast. A long line of dust marks the track from the course, for the sun is now high in the heavens, the lake is rippling in placid beauty under a gentle breeze, and the moving groups of natives, as well as vehicles of all sorts, form a quaint but picturesque sight. After breakfast calls are made upon all the camps and bungalows round the station. Croquet, badminton, and other games go on until dinner-time. I could linger lovingly over a camp dinner; the rare dishes, the sparkling conversation, the racy anecdote, and the general jollity and brotherly feeling; but we must all dress for the ball, and so about 9 P.M. the buggies are again in requisition for the ball room—the fine, large, central apartment in the Planters' Club.

The walls are festooned with flowers, gay curtains, flags and cloths. The floor is shining like silver, and as polished as a mirror. The band strikes up the Blue Danube waltz,

amid the usual bustle, flirtation, scandal, whispering, glancing, dancing, tripping, sipping, and hand-squeezing, the ball goes gaily on till the stewards announce supper. At this—to the wall-flowers—welcome announcement, we adjourn from the heated ball-room to the cool arbour-like supper tent, where every delicacy that can charm the eye or tempt the appetite is spread out.

Next morning early we are out with the hounds, and enjoy a rattling burst round by the racecourse, where the horses are at exercise. Perchance we have heard of a boar in the sugar-cane, and away we go with beaters to rouse the grisly monster from his lair. In the afternoon there is hockey on horseback, or volunteer drill, with our gallant adjutant putting us through our evolutions. In the evening there is the usual drive, dinner, music, and the ordinary, and so the meet goes on. A constant succession of gaieties keeps every one alive, till the time arrives for a return to our respective factories, and another year's hard work.

CHAPTER IX.

Pig-sticking in India—Varieties of boar—Their size and height—Ingenious mode of capture by the natives—The "Batan" or buffalo herd—Pigs charging—Their courage and ferocity—Destruction of game—A close season for game.

THE sport *par excellence* of India is pig-sticking. Call it hog-hunting if you will, I prefer the honest old-fashioned name. With a good horse under one, a fair country, with not too many pitfalls, and "lots of pig," this sport becomes the most exciting that can be practised. Some prefer tiger shooting from elephants, others like to stalk the lordly ibex on the steep Himalayan slopes, but anyone who has ever enjoyed a rattle after a pig over a good country, will recall the fierce delight, the eager thrill, the wild, mad excitement, that flushed his whole frame, as he met the infuriate charge of a good thirty-inch fighting boar, and drove his trusty spear well home, laying low the gallant grey tusker, the indomitable, unconquerable, grisly boar. The subject is well worn; and though the theme is a noble one, there are but few I fancy who have not read the record of some gallant fight, where the highest skill, the finest riding, the most undaunted pluck, and the cool, keen daring of a practised hand are not *always* successful against the headlong rush and furious charge of a Bengal boar at bay.

A record of planter life in India, however, such as this aims at being, would be incomplete without some reference to the gallant tusker, and so at the risk of tiring my readers, I must try to describe a pig-sticking party.

There are two distinct kinds of boar in India, the black and the grey. Their dispositions are very different, the grey being fiercer and more pugnacious. He is a vicious and implacable foe when roused, and always shows better fight than the black variety. The great difference, however, is in the shape of the skull; that of the black fellow being high over the frontal bone, and not very long in proportion to height, while the skull of the grey boar is never very high, but is long, and receding in proportion to height.

The black boar grows to an enormous size, and the grey ones are, generally speaking, smaller made animals than the black. The young of the two also differ in at least one important particular; those of the grey pig are always born striped, but the young of the black variety are born of that colour, and are not striped but a uniform black colour throughout. The two kinds of pig sometimes interbreed, but crosses are not common; and, from the colour, size, shape of the head, and general behaviour, one can easily tell at a glance what kind of pig gets up before his spear, whether it is the heavy, sluggish black boar, or the veritable fiery, vicious, fighting grey tusker.

Many stories are told of their enormous size, and a "forty-inch tusker" is the established standard for a Goliath among boars. The best fighting boars, however, range from twenty-eight to thirty-two inches in height, and I make bold to say that very few of the present generation of sportsmen have ever seen a veritable wild boar over thirty-eight inches high.

G. S., who has had perhaps as much jungle experience as any man of his age in India, a careful observer, and a finished sportsman, tells me that the biggest *boar* he ever saw was only thirty-eight inches high; while the biggest *pig* he ever killed was a barren sow, with three-inch tusks sticking out of her gums; she measured thirty-nine-and-a-half inches, and fought like a demon. I have shot pig—in heavy jungle where spearing was impracticable—over thirty-six inches

high, but the biggest pig I ever stuck to my own spear was only twenty-eight inches, and I do not think any pig has been killed in Chumparun, within the last ten or a dozen years at any rate, over thirty-eight inches.

In some parts of India, where pigs are numerous and the jungle dense, the natives adopt a very ingenious mode of hunting. I have frequently seen it practised by the cowherds on the Koosee *dyaras*, i.e. the flat swampy jungles on the banks of the Koosee. When the annual floods have subsided, leaving behind a thick deposit of mud, wrack, and brushwood, the long thick grass soon shoots up to an amazing height, and vast herds of cattle and tame buffaloes come down to the jungles from the interior of the country, where natural pasture is scarce. They are attended by the owner and his assistants, all generally belonging to the *gualla*, or cowherd caste, although, of course, there are other castes employed. The owner of the herd gets leave to graze his cattle in the jungle, by paying a certain fixed sum per head. He fixes on a high dry ridge of land, where he runs up a few grass huts for himself and men, and there he erects lines of grass and bamboo screens, behind which his cattle take shelter at night from the cold south-east wind. There are also a few huts of exceedingly frail construction for himself and his people. This small colony, in the midst of the universal jungle covering the country for miles round, is called a *batan*.

At earliest dawn the buffaloes are milked, and then with their attendant herdsmen they wend their way to the jungle, where they spend the day, and return again to the batan at night, when they are again milked. The milk is made into *ghee*, or clarified butter, and large quantities are sent down to the towns by country boats. When we want to get up a hunt, we generally send to the nearest *batan* for *khubber*, i.e. news, information. The *Batanea*, or proprietor of the establishment, is well posted up. Every herdsman as he comes

in at night tells what animals he has seen through the day, and thus at the *batan* you hear where tiger, and pig, and deer are to be met with; where an unlucky cow has been killed; in what ravine is the thickest jungle; where the path is free from clay or quicksand; what fords are safest; and, in short, you get complete information on every point connected with the jungle and its wild inhabitants.

To these men the mysterious jungle reveals its most hidden secrets. Surrounded by his herd of buffaloes, the *gualla* ventures into the darkest recesses and the most tangled thickets. They have strange wild calls by which they give each other notice of the approach of danger, and when two or three of them meet, each armed with his heavy, iron-shod or brass-bound *lathee* or quarter staff, they will not budge an inch out of their way for buffalo or boar; nay, they have been known to face the terrible tiger himself, and fairly beat him away from the quivering carcase of some unlucky member of their herd. They have generally some favourite buffalo on whose broad back they perch themselves, as it browses through the jungle, and from this elevated seat they survey the rest of the herd, and note the incidents of jungle life. When they wish a little excitement, or a change from their milk and rice diet, there are hundreds of pigs around.

They have a broad, sharp spear-head, to which is attached a stout cord, often made of twisted hide or hair. Into the socket of the spear is thrust a bamboo pole or shaft, tough, pliant, and flexible. The cord is wound round the spear and shaft, and the loose end is then fastened to the middle of the pole. Having thus prepared his weapon, the herdsman mounts his buffalo, and guides it slowly, warily, and cautiously to the haunts of the pig. These are, of course, quite accustomed to see the buffaloes grazing round them on all sides, and take no notice until the *gualla* is within striking distance. When he has got close up to the pig he fancies, he throws his spear with all his force. The pig naturally

bounds off, the shaft comes out of the socket, leaving the spearhead sticking in the wound. The rope uncoils of itself, but being firmly fastened to the bamboo, it brings up the pig at each bush, and tears and lacerates the wound, until either the spearhead comes out, or the wretched pig drops down dead from exhaustion and loss of blood. The *gualla* follows upon his buffalo, and frequently finishes the pig with a few strokes of his *lathee*. In any case he gets his pork, and it certainly is an ingenious and bold way of procuring it.

Wild pig are very destructive to crops. During the night they revel in the cultivated fields contiguous to the jungle, and they destroy more by rooting up than by actually eating. It is common for the ryot to dig a shallow pit, and ensconce himself inside with his matchlock beside him. His head being on a level with the ground, he can discern any animal that comes between him and the sky-line. When a pig comes in sight, he waits till he is within sure distance, and then puts either a bullet or a charge of slugs into him.

The pig is perhaps the most stubborn and courageous animal in India. Even when pierced with several spears, and bleeding from numerous wounds, he preserves a sullen silence. He disdains to utter a cry of fear and pain, but maintains a bold front to the last, and dies with his face to the foe, defiant and unconquered. When hard pressed he scorns to continue his flight, but wheeling round, he makes a determined charge, very frequently to the utter discomfiture of his pursuer.

I have seen many a fine horse fearfully cut by a charging pig, and a determined boar over and over again break through a line of elephants, and make good his escape. There is no animal in all the vast jungle that the elephant dreads more than a lusty boar. I have seen elephants that would stand the repeated charges of a wounded tiger, turn tail and take ignominious flight before the onset of an angry boar.

His thick short neck, ponderous body, and wedge-lik

are admirably fitted for crashing through the thick jungle he inhabits, and when he has made up his mind to charge, very few animals can withstand his furious rush. Instances are quite common of his having made good his charge against a line of elephants, cutting and ripping more than one severely. He has been known to encounter successfully even the kingly tiger himself. Can it be wondered, then, that we consider him a "foeman worthy of our steel"?

To be a good pig-sticker is a recommendation that wins acceptance everywhere in India. In a district like Chumparun where nearly every planter was an ardent sportsman, a good rider, and spent nearly half his time on horseback, pig-sticking was a favourite pastime. Every factory had at least one bit of likely jungle close by, where a pig could always be found. When I first went to India we used to take out our pig-spear over the *zillah* with us as a matter of course, as we never knew when we might hit on a boar.

Things are very different now. Cultivation has much increased. Many of the old jungles have been reclaimed, and I fancy many more pigs are shot by natives than formerly. A gun can be had now for a few rupees, and every loafing "ne'er-do-weel" in the village manages to procure one, and wages indiscriminate warfare on bird and beast. It is a growing evil, and threatens the total extinction of sport in some districts. I can remember when nearly every tank was good for a few brace of mallard, duck, or teal, where never a feather is now to be seen, save the ubiquitous paddy-bird. Jungles, where a pig was a certain find, only now contain a measly jackal, and not always that; and cover in which partridge, quail, and sometimes even florican were numerous, are now only tenanted by the great ground owl, or a colony of field rats. I am far from wishing to limit sport to the European community. I would let every native that wished sport his double barrels or handle his spear with the best of us, but he should follow and indulge in his sport

with reason. The breeding seasons of all animals should be respected, and there should be no indiscriminate slaughter of male and female, young and old. Until all true sportsmen in India unite in this matter, the evil will increase, and by-and-by there will be no animals left to afford sport of any kind.

There are cases where wild animals are so numerous and destructive that extraordinary measures have to be taken for protection from their ravages, but these are very rare. I remember having once to wage a war of extermination against a colony of pigs that had taken possession of some jungle lands near Maharajnugger, a village on the Koosee. I had a deal of indigo growing on cleared patches at intervals in the jungles, and there the pigs would root and revel in spite of watchmen, till at last I was forced in sheer self-defence to begin a crusade against them. We got a line of elephants, and two or three friends came to assist, and in one day, and round one village only, we shot sixty-three full-grown pigs. The villagers must have killed and carried away nearly double that number of young and wounded. That was a very extreme case, and in a pure jungle country; but in settled districts like Tirhoot and Chumparun the weaker sex should always be spared, and a close season for winged game should be insisted on. To the credit of the planters be it said, that this necessity is quite recognised; but every pot-bellied native who can beg, borrow, or steal a gun, or in any way procure one, is constantly on the look out for a pot shot at some unlucky hen-partridge or quail. A whole village will turn out to compass the destruction of some wretched sow that may have shown her bristles outside the jungle in the daytime.

In districts where cultivated land is scarce and populati[illegible] scattered, it is almost impossible to enjoy pig-sticking. [illegible] breaks of open land between the jungles are too sm[illegible] narrow to afford galloping space, and though you

pig out of one patch of jungle, he immediately finds safe shelter in the next. On the banks of some of the large rivers, however, such as the Gunduck and the Bagmuttee, there are vast stretches of undulating sand, crossed at intervals by narrow creeks, and spotted by patches of close, thick jungle. Here the grey tusker takes up his abode with his harem. When once you turn him out from his lair, there is grand hunting room before he can reach the distant patch of jungle to which he directs his flight. In some parts the *jowah* (a plant not unlike broom in appearance) is so thick, that even the elephants can scarcely force their way through, but as a rule the beating is pretty easy, and one is almost sure of a find.

CHAPTER X.

Kuderent jungle—Charged by a pig—The biter bit—"Mac" after the big boar—The horse for pig-sticking—The line of beaters—The boar breaks—"Away! Away!"—First spear—Pig-sticking at Peeprah—The old "lungra" or cripple—A boar at bay—Hurrah for pig-sticking!

THERE was a very fine pig jungle at a place called Kuderent, belonging to a wealthy landowner who went by the name of the Mudhobunny Baboo. We occasionally had a pig-sticking meet here, and as the jungle was strictly preserved, we were never disappointed in finding plenty who gave us glorious sport. The jungles consisted of great grass plains, with thickly-wooded patches of dense tree jungle, intersected here and there by deep ravines, with stagnant pools of water at intervals; the steep sides all thickly clothed with thorny clusters of the wild dog-rose. It was a difficult country to beat, and we had always to supplement the usual gang of beaters with as many elephants as we could collect. In the centre of the jungle was an eminence of considerable height, whence there was a magnificent view of the surrounding country.

Far in the distance the giant Himalayas towered into the still clear air, the guardian barriers of an unknown land. The fretted pinnacles and tremendous ridges, clothed in their pure white mantle of everlasting snow, made a magnificent contrast to the dark, misty, wooded masses formed by the lower ranges of hills. In the early morning, when the first beams of the rising sun had but touched the mountain tops,

leaving the country below shrouded in the dim mists and vapours of retiring night, the sight was most sublime. In presence of such hills and distances, such wondrous-combinations of colour, scenery on such a gigantic scale, even the most thoughtless become impressed with the majesty of nature.

Our camp was pitched on the banks of a clear running mountain stream, brawling over rocks and boulders; and to eyes so long accustomed to the never-ending flatness of the rich alluvial plains, and the terrible sameness of the rice swamps, the stream was a source of unalloyed pleasure. There were only a few places where the abrupt banks gave facilities for fording, and when a pig had broken fairly from the jungle, and was making for the river (as they very frequently did), you would see the cluster of horsemen scattering over the plain like a covey of partridges when the hawk swoops down upon them. Each made for what he considered the most eligible ford, in hopes of being first up with the pig on the further bank, and securing the much coveted first spear.

When a pig is hard pressed, and comes to any natural obstacle, as a ditch, bank, or stream, he almost invariably gets this obstacle between himself and his pursuer; then wheeling round he makes his stand, showing wonderful sagacity in choosing the moment of all others when he has his enemy at most disadvantage. Experienced hands are aware of this, and often try to outflank the boar, but the best men I have seen generally wait a little, till the pig is again under weigh, and then clearing the ditch or bank, put their horses at full speed, which is the best way to make good your attack. The rush of the boar is so sudden, fierce, and determined, that a horse at half speed, or going slow, has no chance of escape; but a well-trained horse at full speed meets the pig in his rush, the spear is delivered with unerring aim, and slightly swerving to the left, you draw it out as you continue your

course, and the poor pig is left weltering in his blood behind you.

On one occasion I was very rudely made aware of this trait. It was a fine fleet young boar we were after, and we had had a long chase, but were now overhauling him fast. I had a good horse under me, and "Jamie" and "Giblets" were riding neck and neck. There was a small mango orchard in front surrounded by the usual ditch and bank. It was nothing of a leap; the boar took it with ease, and we could just see him top the bank not twenty spear lengths ahead. I was slightly leading, and full of eager anxiety and emulation. Jamie called on me to pull up, but I was too excited to mind him. I saw him and Giblets each take an outward wheel about, and gallop off to catch the boar coming out of the cluster of trees on the far side, as I thought. I could not see him, but I made no doubt he was in full flight through the trees. There was plenty of riding room between the rows, so lifting my game little horse at the bank, I felt my heart bound with emulation as I thought I was certain to come up first, and take the spear from two such noted heroes as my companions. I came up with the pig first, sure enough. *He* was waiting for *me*, and scarce giving my horse time to recover his stride after the jump, he rushed at me, every bristle erect, with a vicious grunt of spite and rage. My spear was useless, I had it crosswise on my horse's neck; I intended to attack first, and finding my enemy turning the tables on me in this way was rather disconcerting. I tried to turn aside and avoid the charge, but a branch caught me across the face, and knocked my *puggree* off. In a trice the savage little brute was on me. Leaping up fairly from the ground, he got the heel of my riding boot in his mouth, and tore off the sole from the boot as if it had been so much paper. Jamie and Giblets were sitting outside watching the scene, laughing at my discomfiture. Fortunately the pig had poor tusks, and my fine little horse was unhurt.

out of that orchard as fast as I could, and ever after hesitated about attacking a boar when he had got a bank or ditch between him and me, and was waiting for me on the other side. The far better plan is to wait till he sees you are not pressing him, he then goes off at a surly sling trot, and you can resume the chase with every advantage in your favour. When the blood however is fairly up, and all one's sporting instincts roused, it is hard to listen to the dictates of prudence or the suggestions of caution and experience.

The very same day we had another instance. My manager, "Young Mac," as we called him, had started a huge old boar. He was just over the boar, and about to deliver his thrust, when his horse stumbled in a rat hole (it was very rotten ground), and came floundering to earth, bringing his rider with him. Nothing daunted, Mac picked himself up, lost the horse, but so eager and excited was he, that he continued the chase on foot, calling to some of us to catch his horse while he stuck his boar. The old boar was quite blown, and took in the altered aspect of affairs at a glance; he turned to charge, and we loudly called on Mac to "clear out." Not a bit of it, he was too excited to realise his danger, but Pat fortunately interposed his horse and spear in time, and no doubt saved poor Mac from a gruesome mauling. It was very plucky, but it was very foolish, for heavily weighted with boots, breeches, spurs, and spear, a man could have no chance against the savage onset of an infuriated boar.

In the long thick grass with which the plain was covered the riding was very dangerous. I remember seeing six riders come signally to grief over a blind ditch in this jungle. It adds not a little to the excitement, and really serious accidents are not so common as might be imagined. It is no [illegible]e, however, when a riderless horse, intent on war, comes [illegible]ing up alongside of you as you are sailing along; biting [illegible]king at your own horse, he spoils your sport, throws [illegible]f the chase, and you are lucky if you do not receive

some ugly cut or bruise from his too active heels. There is the great beauty of a well-trained Arab or country-bred; if you get a spill, he waits beside you till you recover your faculties, and get your bellows again in working order; if you are riding a Cabool, or even a waler, it is even betting that he turns to bite or kick you as you lie, or he rattles off in pursuit of your more firmly-seated friends, spoiling their sport, and causing the most fearful explosions of vituperative wrath.

There is something to me intensely exciting in all the varied incidents of a rattling burst across country after a fighting old grey boar. You see the long waving line of staves and spear heads, and quaint-shaped axes, glittering and fluctuating above the feathery tops of the swaying grass. There is an irregular line of stately elephants, each with its towering howdah and dusky mahout, moving slowly along through the rustling reeds. You hear the sharp report of fireworks, the rattling thunder of the big *doobla* or drum, and the ear-splitting clatter of innumerable *tom-toms*. Shouts, oaths, and cries from a hundred noisy coolies, come floating down in bursts of clamour on the soft morning air. The din waxes and wanes as the excited beaters descry a "sounder" of pig ahead; with a mighty roar that makes your blood tingle, the frantic coolies rally for the final burst. Like rockets from a tube, the boar and his progeny come crashing through the brake, and separate before you on the plain. With a wild cheer you dash after them in hot pursuit; no time now to think of pitfalls, banks, or ditches; your gallant steed strains his every muscle, every sense is on the alert, but you see not the bush and brake and tangled thicket that you leave behind you. Your eye is on the dusky glistening hide and the stiff erect bristles in front; the shining tusk and foam-flecked chest are your goal, and the wild excitement culminates as you feel your keen steel go [illegible] through muscle, bone, and sinew, and you know [illegible]

grisly monster has fallen. As you ease your girths and wipe your heated brow, you feel that few pleasures of the chase come up to the noblest, most thrilling sport of all, that of pig-sticking.

The plain is alive with shouting beaters hurrying up to secure the gory carcase of the slaughtered foe. A riderless horse is far away, making off alone for the distant grove, where the snowy tents are glistening through the foliage. On the distant horizon a small cluster of eager sportsmen are fast overhauling another luckless tusker, and enjoying in all their fierce excitement the same sensations you have just experienced. Now is the time to enjoy the soothing weed, and quaff the grateful "peg"; and as the syces and other servants come up in groups of twos and threes, you listen with languid delight to all their remarks on the incidents of the chase; and as, with their acute Oriental imaginations they dilate in terms of truly Eastern exaggeration on your wonderful pluck and daring, you almost fancy yourself really the hero they would make you out to be.

Then the reunion round the festive board at night, when every one again lives through all the excitement of the day. Talk of fox-hunting after pig-sticking, it is like comparing a penny candle to a lighthouse, or a donkey race to the "Grand National"!

Peeprah Factory with its many patches of jungle, its various lakes and fine undulating country, was another favourite rendezvous for the votaries of pig-sticking. The house itself was quite palatial, built on the bank of a lovely horseshoe lake, and embosomed in a grove of trees of great rarity and beautiful foliage. It had been built long before the days of overland routes and Suez canals, when a planter made India his home, and spared no trouble nor expense to make his home comfortable. In the great garden were fruit trees from almost every clime; little channels of solid masonry led from the well to all parts of the garden. Leading

down to the lake was a broad flight of steps, guarded on the one side by an immense peepul tree, whose hollow trunk and wide stretching canopy of foliage had braved the storms of over half a century, on the other side by a most symmetrical almond-tree, which, when in blossom, was the most beautiful object for miles around. A well-kept shrubbery surrounded the house, and tall casuarinas, and glossy dark green india-rubber and bhur-trees, formed a thousand combinations of shade and colour. Here we often met to experience the warm, large-hearted hospitality of dear old Pat and his gentle little wife. At one time there was a pack of harriers, which would lead us a fine sharp burst by the thickets near the river after a doubling hare; but as a rule a meet at Peeprah portended death to the gallant tusker, for the jungles were full of pigs, and only honest hard work was meant when the Peeprah beaters turned out.

The whole country was covered with patches of grass and thorny jungle. Knowing they had another friendly cover close by, the pigs always broke at the first beat, and the riding had to be fast and furious if a spear was to be won. There were some nasty drop jumps, and deep, hidden ditches and accidents are frequent. In one of these hot, sharp gallops poor "Bonnie Morn," a favourite horse belonging to "Jamie," was killed. Not seeing the ditch, it came with tremendous force against the bank, and of course its back was broken. Even in its death throes it recognised its master's voice, and turned round and licked his hand. We were all collected round, and let who will sneer, there were few dry eyes as we saw this last mute tribute of affection from the poor dying animal.

THE DEATH OF "BONNIE MORN."

Alas, my "Brave Bonnie!" the pride of my heart,
The moment has come when from thee I must part;
No more wilt thou hark to the huntsman's glad horn,
My brave little Arab, my poor "Bonnie Morn."

How proudly you bore me at bright break of day,
How gallantly "led," when the boar broke away!
But no more, alas! thou the hunt shalt adorn,
For now thou art dying, my dear "Bonnie Morn."

He'd neigh with delight when I'd enter his stall,
And canter up gladly on hearing my call;
Rub his head on my shoulder while munching his corn,
My dear gentle Arab, my poor "Bonnie Morn."

Or out in the grass, when a pig was in view,
None so eager to start, when he heard a "halloo";
Off, off like a flash, the ground spurning with scorn,
He aye led the van, did my brave "Bonnie Morn."

O'er *nullah* and ditch, o'er hedge, fence, or bank,
No matter, *he'd* clear it, aye in the front rank;
A brave little hunter as ever was born
Was my grand Arab fav'rite, my good "Bonnie Morn."

Or when in the "ranks," who so steady and still?
None better than "Bonnie," more "up" in his drill;
His fine head erect—eyes flashing with scorn—
Right fit for a charger was staunch "Bonnie Morn."

And then on the "Course," who so willing and true?
Past the "stand" like an arrow the bonnie horse flew;
No spur his good rider need ever have worn,
For he aye did his best, did my fleet "Bonnie Morn."

And now here he lies, the good little horse,
No more he 'll career in the hunt or on "course":
Such a charger to lose makes me sad and forlorn;
I *can't* help a tear, 'tis for poor "Bonnie Morn."

Ah! blame not my grief, for 'tis deep and sincere,
As a friend and companion I held "Bonnie" dear;
No true sportsman ever such feelings will scorn
As I heave a deep sigh for my brave "Bonnie Morn."

And even in death, when in anguish he lay,
When his life's blood was drip—dripping—slowly away,
His last thought was still of the master he'd borne;
He neighed, licked my hand—and thus died "Bonnie Morn."

One tremendous old boar was killed here during one of r meets, which was long celebrated in our after-dinner on boars and hunting. It was called "THE LUNGRA," means the cripple, because it had been wounded in

the leg in some previous encounter, perhaps in its hot youth, before age had stiffened its joints and tinged its whiskers with grey. It was the most undaunted pig I have ever seen. It would not budge an inch for the beaters, and charged the elephants time after time, ousting them repeatedly from the jungle. At length its patience becoming exhausted, it slowly emerged from the jungle, coolly surveyed the scene and its surroundings, and then, disdaining flight, charged straight at the nearest horseman. Its hide was as tough as a Highland targe, and though L. delivered his spear, the weapon turned aside as if it was merely a thrust from a wooden pole. The old *lungra* made good his charge, and ripped L.'s horse on the shoulder. It next charged Pat, and ripped his horse, and cut another horse, a valuable black waler, across the knee, laming it for life. Rider after rider charged down upon the fierce old brute. Although repeatedly wounded none of the thrusts were very serious, and already it had put five horses *hors de combat.* It now took up a position under a big "bhur" tree, close to some water, and while the boldest of us held back for a little, it took a deliberate mud bath under our very noses. Doubtless feeling much refreshed, it again took up its position under the tree, ready to face each fresh assailant, full of fight, and determined to die but not to yield an inch.

Time after time we rode at the dauntless cripple. Each time he charged right down, and our spears made little mark upon his toughened hide. Our horses too were getting tired of such a customer, and little inclined to face his charge. At length "Jamie" delivered a lucky spear and the grey old warrior fell. It had kept us at bay for fully an hour and a half, and among our number we reckoned some of the best riders and boldest pig-stickers in the district.

Such was our sport in those good old days. Our meets came but seldom, so that sport never interfered with the interests of honest hard work; but meeting each other as did, and engaging in exciting sport like pig-sticking, ce

our friendship, kept us in health, and encouraged all the hardy tendencies of our nature. It whetted our appetites, it roused all those robust virtues that have made Englishmen the men they are, it sent us back to work with lighter hearts and renewed energy. It built up many happy, cherished memories of kindly words and looks and deeds, that will only fade when we in turn have to bow before the hunter, and render up our spirits to God who gave them. Long live honest, hearty, true sportsmen, such as were the friends of those happy days. Long may Indian sportsmen find plenty of "foemen worthy of their steel" in the old grey boar, the fighting tusker of Bengal.

PIG-STICKERS.

CHAPTER XI.

The sal forests—The jungle goddess—The trees in the jungle—Appearance of the forests—Birds—Varieties of parrots—A "beat" in the forest—The "shekarry"—Mehrman Singh and his gun—The Banturs, a jungle tribe of wood-cutters—Their habits—A village feast—We beat for deer—Habits of the spotted deer—Waiting for the game—Mehrman Singh gets drunk—Our bag—Pea-fowl and their habits—How to shoot them—Curious custom of the Nepaulese—How Juggroo was tricked, and his revenge.

TIRHOOT is too generally under cultivation and too thickly inhabited for much land to remain under jungle, and except the wild pig of which I have spoken, and many varieties of wild fowl, there is little game to be met with. It is, however, different in North Bhaugulpore, where there are still vast tracts of forest jungle, the haunt of the spotted deer, nilghau, leopard, wolf, and other wild animals. Along the banks of the Koosee, a rapid mountain river that rolls its flood through numerous channels to join the Ganges, there are immense tracts of uncultivated land covered with tall elephant grass, and giving cover to tigers, hog deer, pig, wild buffalo, and even an occasional rhinoceros, to say nothing of smaller game and wild fowl, which are very plentiful.

The sal forests in North Bhaugulpore generally keep to the high ridges, which are composed of a light, sandy soil, very friable, and not very fertile, except for oil and indigo seeds, which grow most luxuriantly wherever the forest land has been cleared. In the shallow valleys which lie between the ridges rice is chiefly cultivated, and gives large returns. The sal forests have been sadly thinned by unscientific

indiscriminate cutting, and very few fine trees now remain. The earth is teeming with insects, chief amongst which are the dreaded and destructive white ants. The high pointed nests of these destructive insects, formed of hardened mud, are the commonest objects one meets with in these forest solitudes.

At intervals, beneath some wide-spreading peepul or bhur tree, one comes on a rude forest shrine, daubed all over with red paint, and with gaudy festoons of imitation flowers, cut from the pith of the plantain tree, hanging on every surrounding bough. These shrines are sacred to *Chumpa buttee*, the Hindoo Diana, protectress of herds, deer, buffaloes, huntsmen, and herdsmen. She is the recognised jungle goddess, and is held in great veneration by all the wild tribes and half-civilized denizens of the gloomy sal jungle.

The general colour of the forest is a dingy green, save when a deeper shade here and there shows where the mighty bhur uprears its towering height, or where the crimson flowers of the *seemul* or cotton tree, and the bronze-coloured foliage of the *sunput* (a tree very like the ornamental beech in shrubberies at home) imparts a more varied colour to the generally pervading dark green of the universal sal.

The varieties of trees are of course almost innumerable, but the sal is so out of all proportion more numerous than any other kind, that the forests well deserve their recognised name. The sal is a fine, hard wood of very slow growth. The leaves are broad and glistening, and in spring are beautifully tipped with a reddish bronze, which gradually tones down into the dingy green which is the prevailing tint. The *sheshum* or *sissoo*, a tree with bright green leaves much resembling the birch, the wood of which is invaluable for cart wheels and such-like work, is occasionally met with. There is the *koombhe*, a very tough wood with a red stringy bark, of which the jungle men make a kind of touchwood for their matchlocks, and the *parass*, whose peculiarity is that

at times it bursts into a wondrous wealth of bright crimson blossom without a leaf being on the tree. The *parass* tree in full bloom is gorgeous. After the blossom falls the dark-green leaves come out, and are not much different in colour from the sal. Then there is the *mhowà*, with its lovely white blossoms, from which a strong spirit is distilled, and on which the deer, pigs, and wild boar love to feast. The peculiar sickly smell of the *mhowa* when in flower pervades the atmosphere for a great distance round, and reminds one forcibly of the peculiar sweet, sickly smell of a brewery. The hill *sirres* is a tall feathery-looking tree of most elegant shape, towering above the other forest trees, and the natives strip it of its bark, which they use to poison streams. It seems to have some narcotic or poisonous principle, easily soluble in water, for when put in any quantity in a stream or piece of water, it causes all the fish to become apparently paralyzed and rise to the surface, where they float about quite stupefied and helpless, and become an easy prey to the poaching "Banturs" and "Moosahurs" who adopt this wretched mode of fishing.

Along the banks of the streams vegetation gets very luxurious, and among the thick undergrowth are found some lovely ferns, broad-leaved plants, and flowers of every hue, all alike nearly scentless. Here is no odorous breath of violet or honeysuckle, no delicate perfume of primrose or sweetbriar, only a musty, dank, earthy smell which gets more and more pronounced as the mists rise along with the deadly vapours of the night. Sleeping in these forests is very unhealthy. There is a most fatal miasma all through the year—less during the hot months, but very bad during and immediately after the annual rains; and in September and October nearly every soul in the jungly tracts is smitten with fever. The vapour only rises to a certain height above the ground, and at the elevation of ten feet or so, I believe one could sleep in the jungles with impunity; but it is

dangerous at all times to sleep in the forest, unless at a considerable elevation. The absence of all those delicious smells which make a walk through the woodlands at home so delightful, is conspicuous in the sal forests, and another of the most noticeable features is the extreme silence, the oppressive stillness that reigns.

You know how full of melody is an English wood, when thrush, blackbird, mavis, linnet, and a thousand warblers flit from tree to tree. How the choir rings out its full anthem of sweetest sound, till every bush and tree seems a centre of sweet strains, soft, low, liquid trills, and full ripe gushes of melody and song. But it is not thus in an Indian forest. There are actually few birds. As you brush through the long grass and trample the tangled undergrowth, putting aside the sprawling branches, or dodging under the pliant arms of the creepers, you may flush a black or grey partridge, raise a covey of quail, or startle a quiet family party of pea-fowl, but there are no sweet singers flitting about to make the vaulted arcades of the forest echo to their music.

The hornbill darts with a succession of long bounding flights from one tall tree to another. The large woodpecker taps a hollow tree close by, his gorgeous plumage glistening like a mimic rainbow in the sun. A flight of green parrots sweep screaming above your head, the *golden oriole* or mango bird, the *koel*, with here and there a red-tufted *bulbul*, make a faint attempt at a chirrup; but as a rule the deep silence is unbroken, save by the melancholy hoot of some blinking owl, and the soft monotonous coo of the ringdove or the green pigeon. The exquisite honeysucker, as delicately formed as the petal of a fairy flower, flits noiselessly about from blossom to blossom. The natives call it the "Mudh-penah" or drinker of honey. There are innumerable butter-flies of graceful shape and gorgeous colours; what few birds there are have beautiful plumage; there is a faint rustle of leaves, a faint, far hum of insect life; but it feels so silent,

so unlike the woods at home. You are oppressed by the solemn stillness, and feel almost nervous as you push warily along, for at any moment a leopard, wolf, or hyena may get up before you, or you may disturb the siesta of a sounder of pig, or a herd of deer.

Up in those forests on the borders of Nepaul, which are called the *morung*, there are a great many varieties of parrot, all of them very beautiful. There is first the common green parrot, with a red beak, and a circle of salmon-coloured feathers round its neck; they are very noisy and destructive, and flock together to the fields where they do great damage to the crops. The *lutkun sooga* is an exquisitely-coloured bird, about the size of a sparrow. The *ghurāl*, a large red and green parrot, with a crimson beak. The *tota*, a yellowish-green colour, and the male with a breast as red as blood; they call it the *amereet bhela*. Another lovely little parrot, the *taeteea sooga*, has a green body, red head, and black throat; but the most showy and brilliant of all the tribe is the *putsoogee*. The body is a rich living green, red wings, yellow beak, and black throat; there is a tuft of vivid red as a topknot, and the tail is a brilliant blue; the under feathers of the tail being a pure snowy white.

At times the silence is broken by a loud, metallic, bell-like cry, very like the yödel you hear in the Alps. You hear it rise sharp and distinct, "Looralei!" and as suddenly cease. This is the cry of the *kookoor ghēt*, a bird not unlike a small pheasant, with a reddish-brown back and a fawn-coloured breast. The *sherra* is another green parrot, a little larger than the *putsoogee*, but not so beautifully coloured.

There is generally a green, slime-covered, sluggish stream in all these forests, its channel choked with rotting leaves and decaying vegetable matter. The water should never be drunk until it has been boiled and filtered. At intervals the stream opens out and forms a clear rush-fringed pool, and the trees receding on either bank leave a lovely grassy glade,

where the deer and nilghau come to drink. On the glassy bosom of the pool in the centre, fine duck, mallard, and teal, can frequently be found, and the rushes round the margin are to a certainty good for a couple of brace of snipe.

Sometimes on a withered branch overhanging the stream, you can see perched the *ahur*, or great black fish-hawk. It has a grating, discordant cry, which it utters at intervals as it sits pluming its black feathers above the pool. The dark ibis and the ubiquitous paddy-bird are of course also found here; and where the land is low and marshy, and the stream crawls along through several channels, you are sure to come across a couple of red-headed *sarus*, serpent birds, a crane, and a solitary heron. The *moosahernee* is a black and white bird, I fancy a sort of ibis, and is good eating. The *dokahur* is another fine big bird, black body and white wings, and as its name (derived from *dokha*, a shell) implies, it is the shell-gatherer, or snail-eater, and gives good shooting.

When you have determined to beat the forest, you first get your coolies and villagers assembled, and send them some mile or two miles ahead, under charge of some of the head men, to beat the jungle towards you, while you look out for a likely spot, shady, concealed, and cool, where you wait with your guns till the game is driven up to you. The whole arrangements are generally made, of course under your own supervision, by your *Shekarry*, or gamekeeper, as I suppose you might call him. He is generally a thin, wiry, silent man, well versed in all the lore of the woods, acquainted with the name, appearance, and habits of every bird and beast in the forest. He knows their haunts and when they are to be found at home. He will track a wounded deer like a blood-hound, and can tell the signs and almost impalpable evi-dences of an animal's whereabouts, the knowledge of which to make up the genuine hunter.

en all is still around, and only the distant shouts of ers fall faintly at intervals on the ear, his keen

hearing detects the light patter of hoof or paw on the crisp, withered leaves. His hawk-like glance can pick out from the deepest shade the sleek coat or hide of the leopard or the deer; and even before the animal has come in sight, his senses tell him whether it is young or old, whether it is alarmed, or walking in blind confidence. In fact, I have known a good shekarry tell you exactly what animal is coming, whether bear, leopard, fox, deer, pig, or monkey.

The best shekarry I ever had was a Nepaulee called "Mehrman Singh." He had the regular Tartar physiognomy of the Nepaulese. Small, oblique, twinkling eyes, high cheekbones, flattish nose, and scanty moustache. He was a tall, wiry man, with a remarkably light springy step, a bold erect carriage, and was altogether a fine, manly, independent fellow. He had none of the fawning obsequiousness which is so common to the Hindoo, but was a merry laughing fellow, with a keen love of sport and a great appreciation of humour. His gun was fearfully and wonderfully made. It was a long, heavy flint gun, with a tremendously heavy barrel, and the stock all splices and splinters, tied in places with bits of string. I would rather not have been in the immediate vicinity of the weapon when he fired it, and yet he contrived to do some good shooting with it.

He was wonderfully patient in stalking an animal or waiting for its near approach, as he never ventured on a long shot, and did not understand our objection to pot-shooting. His shot was composed of jagged little bits of iron, chipped from an old *kunthee,* or cooking-pot; and his powder was truly unique, being like lumps of charcoal, about the size of small raisins. A shekarry fills about four or five fingers' depth of this into his gun, then a handful of old iron, and with a little touch of English powder pricked in with a pin as priming, he is ready for execution on any game that may come within reach of a safe pot-shot. When the gun goes off there is a mighty splutter, a roar like that of a small cannon,

and the slugs go hurtling through the bushes, carrying away twigs and leaves, and not unfrequently smashing up the game so that it is almost useless for the table.

The *Banturs*, who principally inhabit these jungles, are mostly of Nepaulese origin. They are a sturdy, independent people, and the women have fair skins, and are very pretty. Unchastity is very rare, and the infidelity of a wife is almost unknown. If it is found out, mutilation and often death are the penalties exacted from the unfortunate woman. They wear one long loose flowing garment, much like the skirt of a gown; this is tightly twisted round the body above the bosoms, leaving the neck and arms quite bare. They are fond of ornaments—nose, ears, toes and arms, and even ancles, being loaded with silver rings and circlets. Some decorate their nose and the middle parting of the hair with a greasy-looking red pigment, while nearly every grown-up woman has her arms, neck, and low down on the collar-bone most artistically tatooed in a variety of close, elaborate patterns. The women all work in the clearings; sowing, and weeding, and reaping the rice, barley, and other crops. They do most of the digging where that is necessary, the men confining themselves to ploughing and wood-cutting. At the latter employment they are most expert; they use the axe in the most masterly manner, but their mode of cutting is fearfully wasteful; they always leave some three feet of the best part of the wood in the ground, very rarely cutting a tree close down to the root. Many of them are good charcoal-burners, and indeed their principal occupation is supplying the adjacent villages with charcoal and firewood. They use small narrow-edged axes for felling, but for lopping they invariably use the Nepaulese national weapon—the *kookree*. This is a heavy, curved knife, with a broad blade, the edge very sharp, and the back thick and heavy. In using it they slash right and left with a quick downward stroke, drawing the blade quickly toward them as they strike. They are

wonderfully dexterous with the *kookree*, and will clear away brush and underwood almost as quickly as a man can walk. They pack their charcoal, rice, or other commodities, in long narrow baskets, which they sling on a pole carried on their shoulders, as we see the Chinese doing in the well-known pictures on tea-chests. They are all Hindoos in religion, but are very fond of rice-whiskey. Although not so abstemious in this respect as the Hindoos of the plains, they are a much finer race both physically and morally. As a rule they are truthful, honest, brave, and independent. They are always glad to see you, laugh out merrily at you as you pass, and are wonderfully hospitable. It would be a nice point for Sir Wilfrid Lawson to reconcile the use of rice-whiskey with this marked superiority in all moral virtues in the whiskey-drinking, as against the totally-abstaining Hindoo.

To return to Mehrman Singh. His face was seamed with smallpox marks, and he had seven or eight black patches on it the first time I saw him, caused by the splintering of his flint when he let off his antediluvian gun. When he saw my breechloaders, the first he had ever beheld, his admiration was unbounded. He told me he had come on a leopard asleep in the forest one day, and crept up quite close to him. His faith in his old gun, however, was not so lively as to make him rashly attack so dangerous a customer, so he told me. "*Hum usko jan deydea oos wukt*," that is, "I *gave* the brute its life that time, but," he continued, "had I had an English gun like this, your honour, I would have blown the *soor* (*Anglice*, pig) to Jehuddum, *i.e.* Hades." Old Mehrman was rather strong in his expletives at times, but I was not a little amused at the cool way he spoke of *giving* the leopard its life. The probability is, that had he only wounded the animal, he would have lost his own.

These Nepaulese are very fond of giving feasts to each other. Their dinner-parties, I assure you, are very often "great affairs." They are not mean in their arrangements,

and the wants of the inner man are very amply provided for. Their crockery is simple and inexpensive. When the feast is prepared, each guest provides himself with a few broad leaves from the nearest sal-tree, and forming these into a cup, he pins them together with thorns from the acacia. Squatting down in a circle, with half-a-dozen of these sylvan cups around, the attendant fills one with rice, another with *dhall*, a third with goat's-flesh, a fourth with *turkaree* or vegetables, a fifth with chutnee, pickle, or some kind of preserve. Curds, ghee, a little oil perhaps, sugar, plantains, and other fruit are not wanting, and the whole is washed down with copious draughts of fiery rice-whiskey, or, where it can be procured, with palm-toddy. Not unfrequently dancing boys or girls are in attendance, and the horrid din of tom-toms, cymbals, a squeaking fiddle, or a twanging sitar, rattling castanets, and ear-piercing songs from the dusky *prima donna*, makes night hideous, until the grey dawn peeps over the dark forest line.

Early in January, 1875, my camp was at a place in the sal jungles called Lohurneah. I had been collecting rents and looking after my seed cultivation, and Pat and our sporting District Engineer having joined me, we determined to have a beat for deer. Mehrman Singh had reported numerous herds in the vicinity of our camp. During the night we had been disturbed by the revellers at such a feast in the village as I have been describing. We had filled cartridges, seen to our guns, and made every preparation for the beat, and early in the morning the coolies and idlers of the forest villages all round were ranged in circles about our camp.

Swallowing a hasty breakfast we mounted our ponies, and, followed by our ragged escort, made off for the forest. On the way we met a crowd of Banturs with bundles of stakes and great coils of strong heavy netting. Sending the coolies on ahead under charge of several headmen and peons, we plunged into the gloom of the forest, leaving our ponies and

grooms outside. When we came to a likely-looking spot, the Banturs began operations by fixing up the nets on the stakes and between trees, till a line of strong net extended across the forest for several hundred yards. We then went ahead, leaving the nets behind us, and each took up his station about 200 yards in front. The men with the nets then hid themselves behind trees, and crouched in the underwood. With our kookries we cut down several branches, stuck them in the ground in front, and ensconced ourselves in this artificial shelter. Behind us, and between us and the nets, was a narrow cart track leading through the forest, and the reason of our taking this position was given me by Pat, who was an old hand at jungle shooting.

When deer are being driven, they are intensely suspicious, and of course frightened. They know every spot in the jungle, and are acquainted with all the paths, tracks, and open places in the forest. When they are nearing an open glade, or a road, they slacken their pace, and go slowly and warily forward, an old buck generally leading. When he has carefully reconnoitred and examined the suspected place in front, and found it clear to all appearance, they again put on the pace, and clear the open ground at their greatest speed. The best chance of a shot is when a path is in front of *them* and behind *you*, as then they are going slowly.

At first when I used to go out after them, I often got an open glade, or road, in *front* of me; but experience soon told me that Pat's plan was the best. As this was a beat not so much for real sport, as to show me how the villagers managed these affairs, we were all under Pat's direction, and he could not have chosen better ground. I was on the extreme left, behind a clump of young trees, with the sluggish muddy stream on my left. Our Engineer to my right was about one hundred yards off, and Pat himself on the extreme right, at about the same distance from H. Behind us was the road, and in the rear the long line of nets, with their concealed

watchers. The nets are so set up on the stakes, that when an animal bounds along and touches the net, it falls over him, and ere he can extricate himself from its meshes, the vigilant Banturs rush out and despatch him with spears and clubs.

We waited a long time hearing nothing of the beaters, and watching the red and black ants hurrying to and fro. Huge green-bellied spiders oscillated backwards and forwards in their strong, symmetrically woven webs. A small mungoose kept peeping out at me from the roots of an old india-rubber tree, and aloft in the branches an amatory pair of hidden ringdoves were billing and cooing to each other. At this moment a stealthy step stole softly behind, and the next second Mr. Mehrman Singh crept quietly and noiselessly beside me, his face flushed with rapid walking, his eyes flashing with excitement, his finger on his lip, and a look of portentous gravity and importance striving to spread itself over his speaking countenance. Mehrman had been up all night at the feast, and was as drunk as a piper. It was no use being angry with him, so I tried to keep him quiet and resumed my watch.

A few minutes afterwards he grasped me by the wrist, rather startling me, but in a low hoarse whisper warning me that a troop of monkeys was coming. I could not hear the faintest rustle, but sure enough in a minute or two a troop of over twenty monkeys came hopping and shambling along, stopping every now and then to sit on their hams, look back, grin, jabber, and show their formidable teeth, until Mehrman rose up, waved his cloth at them, and turned them off from the direction of the nets toward the bank of the stream.

Next came a fox, slouching warily and cautiously along; then a couple of lean, hungry-looking jackals; next a sharp patter on the crisp dry leaves, and several peafowl with resplendent plumage ran rapidly past. Another touch on the arm from Mehrman, and following the direction of his

outstretched hand, I descried a splendid buck within thirty yards of me, his antlers and chest but barely visible above the brushwood. My gun was to my shoulder in an instant, but the shekarry in an excited whisper implored me not to fire. I hesitated, and just then the stately head turned round to look behind, and exposing the beautifully curving neck full to my aim, I fired, and had the satisfaction of seeing the fine buck topple over, seemingly hard hit.

A shot on my right, and two shots in rapid succession further on, showed me that Pat and H. were also at work, and then the whole forest seemed alive with frightened, madly-plunging pig, deer, and other animals. I fired at, and wounded an enormous boar that came rushing past, and now the cries of the coolies in front as they came trooping on, mingled with the shouts of the men at the nets, where the work of death evidently was going on.

It was most exciting while it lasted, but, after all, I do not think it was honest sport. The only apology I could make to myself was, that the deer and pig were far too numerous, and doing immense damage to the crops, and if not thinned out, they would soon have made the growing of any crop whatever an impossibility.

The monkey, being a sacred animal, is never molested by the natives, and the damage he does in a night to a crop of wheat or barley is astonishing. Peafowl too are very destructive, and what with these and the ravages of pig, deer, hares, and other plunderers, the poor ryot has to watch many a weary night to secure any return from his fields.

On rejoining each other at the nets, we found that five deer and two pigs had been killed. Pat had shot a boar and a porcupine, the latter with No. 4 shot. H. accounted for a deer, and I got my buck and the boar which I had wounded in the chest; Mehrman Singh had followed him up and tracked him to the river, where he took refuge among some long swamp reeds. Replying to his call, we went up, and a

shot through the head settled the old boar for ever. Our bag was therefore for the first beat, seven deer, four pigs, and a porcupine.

The coolies were now sent away out of the jungle, and on ahead for a mile or so, the nets were coiled up, our ponies regained and off we set, to take another station. As we went along the river bank, frequently having to force our way through thick jungle, we started "no end" of peafowl, and getting down we soon added a couple to the bag. Pat got a fine jack snipe, and I shot a *Jheela*, a very fine waterfowl with brown plumage, having a strong metallic, coppery lustre on the back, and a steely dark blue breast. The plumage was very thick and glossy, and it proved afterwards to be excellent eating.

Peafowl generally retire to the thickest part of the jungles during the heat of the day, but if you go out very early, when they are slowly wending their way back from the fields, where they have been revelling all night, you can shoot numbers of them. I used to go about twenty or thirty yards into the jungle, and walk slowly along, keeping that distance from the edge. My syce and pony would then walk slowly by the edges of the fields, and when the syce saw a peafowl ahead, making for the jungle, he would shout and try to make it rise. He generally succeeded, and as I was a little in advance and concealed by the jungle, I would get a fine shot as the bird flew overhead. I have shot as many as eight and ten in a morning in this way. I always used No. 4 shot with about 3½ drams of powder.

Unless hard hit peafowl will often get away; they run with amazing swiftness, and in the heart of the jungle it is almost impossible to make them rise. A couple of sharp terriers, or a good retriever, will sometimes flush them, but the best way is to go along the edge of the jungle in the early morn, as I have described. The peachicks, about seven or eight months old, are deliciously tender and well flavoured.

Old birds are very dry and tough, and require a great deal of that old-fashioned sauce, Hunger.

The common name for a peafowl is *mōr*, but the Nepaulese and Banturs call it *majoor*. Now *majoor* also means coolie, and a young fellow, S., was horrified one day hearing his attendant in the jungle telling him in the most excited way, "*Majoor, majoor*, Sahib; why don't you fire?" Poor S. thought it was a coolie the man meant, and that he must be going mad, wanting him to shoot a coolie, but he found out his mistake, and learnt the double meaning of the word, when he got home and consulted his *manager*.

The generic name for all deer is in Hindustani HURIN, but the Nepaulese call it CHEETER. The male spotted deer they call KUBRA, the female KUBREE. These spotted deer keep almost exclusively to the forests, and are very seldom found far away from the friendly cover of the sal woods. They are the most handsome, graceful-looking animals I know, their skins beautifully marked with white spots, and the horns wide and arching. When properly prepared the skin makes a beautiful mat for a drawing-room, and the horns of a good buck are a handsome ornament to the hall or the verandah. When bounding along through the forest, his beautifully spotted skin flashing through the dark green foliage, his antlers laid back over his withers, he looks the very embodiment of grace and swiftness. He is very timid, and not easily stalked.

In March and April, when a strong west wind is blowing, it rustles the myriads of leaves that, dry as tinder, encumber the earth. This perpetual rustle prevents the deer from hearing the footsteps of an approaching foe. They generally betake themselves then to some patch of grass, or long-crop outside the jungle altogether, and if you want them in those months, it is in such places, and not inside the forest at all, that you must search. Like all the deer tribe, they are very curious, and a bit of rag tied to a tree, or a cloth

put over a bush, will not unfrequently entice them within range.

Old skekarries will tell you that as long as the deer go on feeding and flapping their ears, you may continue your approach. As soon as they throw up the head, and keep the ears still, their suspicions have been aroused, and if you want venison, you must be as still as a rock, till your game is again lulled into security. As soon as the ears begin flapping again, you may continue your stalk, but at the slightest noise, the noble buck will be off like a flash of lightning. You should never go out in the forest with white clothes, as you are then a conspicuous mark for all the prying eyes that are invisible to you. The best colour is dun brown, dark grey, or dark green. When you see a deer has become suspicious, and no cover is near, stand perfectly erect and rigid, and do not leave your legs apart. The "forked-parsnip" formation of the "human form divine" is detected at a glance, but there's just a chance that if your legs are drawn together, and you remain perfectly motionless you may be mistaken for the stump of a tree, or at the best some less dangerous enemy than man.

As we rode slowly along, to allow the beaters to get ahead, and to let the heavily-laden men with the nets, keep up with us, we were amused to hear the remarks of the syces and skekarries on the sport they had just witnessed. Pat's old man, Juggroo, a merry peep-eyed fellow, full of anecdote and humour, was rather hard on Mehrman Singh for having been up late the preceding night. Mehrman, whose head was by this time probably reminding him that there are "lees to every cup," did not seem to relish the humour. He began grasping one wrist with the other hand, working his hand slowly round his wrist, and I noticed that Juggroo immediately changed the subject. This, as I afterwards learned, is the invariable Nepaulese custom of showing anger. They grasp the wrist as I have said, and it is taken as a sign

that, if you do not discontinue your banter, you will have a fight.

The Nepaulese are rather vain of their personal appearance, and hanker greatly after a good thick moustache. This Nature has denied them, for the hair on their faces is scanty and stubbly in the extreme. One day Juggroo saw his master putting some bandoline on his moustache, which was a fine, handsome, silky one. He asked Pat's bearer, an old rogue, what it was.

"Oh," replied the bearer, "that is the gum of the sal tree; master always uses that, and that is the reason he has such a fine moustache."

Juggroo's imagination fired up at the idea.

"Will it make mine grow too?"

"Certainly."

"How do you use it?"

"Just rub it on, as you see master do."

Away went Juggroo to try the new recipe.

Now, the gum of the sal tree is a very strong resin, and hardens in water. It is almost impossible to get it off your skin, as the more water you use, the harder it gets.

Next day Juggroo's face presented a sorry sight. He had plentifully smeared the gum over his upper lip, so that when he washed his face, the gum *set*, making the lip as stiff as a board, and threatening to crack the skin every time the slightest muscle moved.

Juggroo *was* "sold" and no mistake, but he bore it all in grim silence, although he never forgot the old bearer. One day, long after, he brought in some berries from the wood, and was munching them, seemingly with great relish. The bearer wanted to know what they were. Juggroo with much apparent *nonchalance* told him they were some very sweet, juicy, wild berries he had found in the forest. The bearer asked to try one.

Juggroo had *another* fruit ready, very much resembling

those he was eating. It is filled with minute spikelets, or little hairy spinnacles, much resembling those found in ripe doghips at home. If these even touch the skin, they cause intense pain, stinging like nettles, and blistering every part they touch.

The unsuspicious bearer popped the treacherous berry into his mouth, gave it a crunch, and then with a howl of agony, spluttered and spat, while the tears ran down his cheeks, as he implored Juggroo by all the gods to fetch him some water.

Old Juggroo, with a grim smile, walked coolly away, discharging a Parthian shaft, by telling him that these berries, were very good for making the hair grow, and hoped he would soon have a good moustache.

A man from the village now came running up to tell us that there was a leopard in the jungle we were about to beat, and that it had seized, but failed to carry away, a dog from the village during the night. Natives are so apt to tell stories of this kind that at first we did not credit him, but turning into the village he showed us the poor dog, with great wounds on its neck and throat where the leopard had pounced upon it. The noise, it seems, had brought some herdsmen to the place, and their cries had frightened the leopard and saved the wretched dog. As the man said he could show us the spot where the leopard generally remained, we determined to beat him up; so sending a man off on horseback for the beaters to slightly alter their intended line of beat, we rode off, attended by the villager, to get behind the leopard's lair, and see if we could not secure him. These fierce and courageous brutes, for they are both, are very common in the sal jungles; and as I have seen several killed, both in Bhaugulpore and Oudh, I must devote a chapter to the subject.

CHAPTER XII.

The leopard—How to shoot him—Gallant encounter with a wounded one—Encounter with a leopard in a dak bungalow—Pat shoots two leopards—Effects of the Express bullet—The "Sirwah Purrub," or annual festival of huntsmen—The Hindoo ryot—Rice-planting and harvest—Poverty of the ryot—His apathy—Village fires—Want of sanitation.

WRITING principally for friends at home, who are not familiar with Indian life, I must narrate facts that, although well known in Indian circles, are yet new to the general reader in England. My object is of course to represent the life we lead in the far East, and to give a series of pictures of what is going on there. If I occasionally touch on what may to Indian readers seem well-worn ground they will forgive me.

The leopard, then, as a rule keeps to the wooded parts of India. In the long grassy jungles bordering the Koosee he is not generally met with. He is essentially a predatory animal, always on the outlook for a meal; round the villages, nestling amid their sal forests, he is continually on the prowl, looking out for a goat, a calf, or unwary dog. His appearance and habits are well known; he generally selects for his lair a retired spot surrounded by dense jungle. The one we were now after had his home in a matted jungle, growing out of a pool of water, which had collected in a long hollow, forming the receptacle of the surface drainage from the adjacent slopes. This hollow stretched for miles towards the creek which we had been beating up; and the locality having moisture and other concurring elements in its favour, the vegetation had attained a luxuriance rarely seen in the dry uplands, where the west winds lick up the moisture,

and the soil is arid and unpromising. The matted intertwining branches of the creepers had formed an almost impervious screen, and on the basis thus formed, amid the branches and creepers, the leopards had formed their lair. Beneath, was a still stagnant pool; above, was the leafy foliage. The tracks led down to a well-worn path.

Climbing like a cat, as the leopards can do, they found no difficulty in gaining a footing on the mass of vegetation. They generally select some retired spot like this, and are very seldom seen in the daytime. With the approach of night, however, they begin their wandering in quest of prey. In a beat such as we were having "all is fish that comes to the net," and leopards, if they are in the jungle, have to yield to the advance of the beaters, like the other denizens of the forest.

Experience tells you that the leopard is daring and ferocious. Old experienced hands warn you, that unless you can make sure of your shot, it is unwise to fire at a leopard approaching. It is better to wait till he has got past you or at all events is "broadside on." If you only wound him as he is approaching, he will almost to a certainty make straight at you, but if you shoot him as he is going past, he will, maddened by pain and anger, go straight forward, and you escape his charge. He is more courageous than a tiger, and a very dangerous customer at close quarters. Up in one of the forests in Oudh, a friend of mine was out one day after leopard, with a companion who belonged to the forest department. My friend's companion fired at a leopard as it was approaching him, and wounded it severely. Nothing daunted, and recognising whence its hurt had come, it charged directly down on the concealed sportsman, and before he could half realise the position, sprang on him, caught his left arm in its teeth, and began mauling him with its claws. His presence of mind did not desert him; noticing close by, the stump of a sal tree, that had been eaten by white ants till the harder parts of the

wood alone remained, standing up hard and sharp like so many spikes of steel; and knowing that the leopard was already badly wounded, and that he himself was in all probability struggling for his life, he managed to drag the animal up to the stump; jammed his left arm yet further into the open mouth of the wounded beast, and being a strong man, by pure physical force dashed the leopard's brains out on the jagged edges of the stump. It was a splendid instance of presence of mind. He was horribly mauled of course; in fact I believe he lost his arm, but he saved his life. It shows the danger of only wounding a leopard, especially if he is coming towards you; always wait till he is past your station if it is practicable. If you *must* shoot, take what care you can that the shot be a sure one.

In some of the hill stations, and indeed in the villages on the plains, it is very common for a leopard to make his appearance in the house or verandah of an evening.

One was shot in Bhaugulpore station by the genial and respected chaplain, on a Sunday morning two or three years ago. As we went along, H. told us a humorous story of an Assistant in the Public Works Department, who got mauled by a leopard at Dengra Ghat, Dak Bungalow. It had taken up its quarters in a disused room, and this young fellow, burning with ardour to distinguish himself, made straight for the room in which he was known to be. He opened the door, followed by a motley crowd of retainers, discharged his gun, and the sequel proved that he was *not* a dead shot. He had only wounded the leopard. With a bound the savage brute was on him, but in the hurry and confusion he had changed front. The leopard had him by the back. You can imagine the scene! He roared for help. The leopard was badly hit, and a plucky *bearer* came to his rescue with a stout *lathee*. Between them they succeeded in killing the wounded animal, but not before it had left its

marks on a very sensitive portion of his frame. The moral is, if you go after leopard, be sure you kill him at once.

They seldom attack a strong, well-grown animal. Calves, however, goats, and dogs are frequently carried off by them. The young of deer and pig, too, fall victims, and when nothing else can be had, peafowl have been known to furnish them a meal. In my factory in Oudh I had a small, graceful, four-horned antelope. It was carried off by a leopard from the garden in broad daylight, and in face of a gang of coolies.

The most commonly practised mode of leopard shooting, is to tie a goat up to a tree. You have a *mychan* erected, that is, a platform elevated on trees above the ground. Here you take your seat. Attracted by the bleating of the goat, the prowling leopard approaches his intended victim. If you are on the watch, you can generally detect his approach. They steal on with extreme caution, being intensely wary and suspicious. At a village near where we now were, I had sat up for three nights for a leopard, but although I knew he was prowling in the vicinity, I had never got a look at him. We believed this leopard to be the same brute.

I have already described our mode of beating. The jungle was close, and there was a great growth of young trees. I was again on the right, and near the edge of the forest. Beyond was a glade planted with rice. The incidents of the beat were much as you have just read. There was, however, unknown or at any rate unnoticed by us, more intense excitement. We knew that the leopard might at any moment pass before us. Pat was close to a mighty bhur tree, whose branches, sending down shoots from the parent stem, had planted round it a colony of vigorous supports. It was a magnificent tree with dense shade. All was solemn and still. Pat, with his keen eye, his pulse bounding, and every sense on the alert, was keeping a careful look-out from behind an immense projecting buttress of the tree. All was deadly quiet. H. and myself were occupied

watching the gambols of some monkeys in our front. The beaters were yet far off. Suddenly Pat heard a faint crackle on a dried leaf. He glanced in the direction of the sound, and his quick eye detected the glossy coats, the beautifully spotted hides of not *one* leopard, but *two*. In a moment the stillness was broken by the report of his rifle. Another report followed sharp and quick. We were on the alert, but to Pat the chief honour and glory belonged. He had shot one leopard dead through the heart. The female was badly hit and came bounding along in my direction. Of course we were now on the *qui vive*. Waiting for an instant, till I could get my aim clear of some intervening trees, I at length got a fair shot, and brought her down with a ball through the throat. H. and Pat came running up, and we congratulated ourselves on our success. By-and-by Mehrman Singh and the rest of the beaters came up, and the joy of the villagers was gratifying. These were doubtless the two leopards we had heard so much about, for which I had sat up and watched. It was amusing to see some villager whose pet goat or valued calf had been carried off, now coming up, striking the dead body of the leopard, and abusing it in the most unmeasured terms. Such a crowding round as there was! such a noise, and such excitement!

While waiting for the horses to be brought, and while the excited mob of beaters and coolies carried off the dead animals to the camp to be skinned, we amused ourselves by trying our rifles at a huge tree that grew on the further side of the rice swamp. We found the effects of the "Express" bullet to be tremendous. It splintered up and burst the bark and body of the tree into fragments. Its effects on an animal are even more wonderful. On looking afterwards at the leopard which had been shot, we found that my bullet had touched the base of the shoulder, near the collar-bone. It had gone downwards through the neck, under the collar-bone, and struck the shoulder. There it had splintered up

and made a frightful wound, scattering its fragments all over the chest, and cutting and lacerating everything in its way.

For big game the "Express" is simply invaluable. For all-round shooting perhaps a No. 12 smooth-bore is the best. It should be snap action with rebounding locks. You should have facilities and instruments for loading cartridges. A good cartridge belt is a good thing for carrying them, but go where you will now, where there is game to be killed, a No. 12 B. L. will enable you to participate in whatever shooting is going. Such a one as I have described would satisfy all the wishes of any young man who perhaps can only afford one gun.

As we rode slowly along, we learned many curious facts of jungle and native life from the followers, and by noticing little incidents happening before our eyes. Pat, who is so well versed in jungle life and its traditions, told us of a curious moveable feast which the natives of these parts hold annually, generally in March or April, which is called the *Sirwah Purrub.*

It seems to be somewhat like the old carnivals of the middle ages. I have read that in Sardinia, and Italy, and Switzerland something similar takes place. The *Sirwah Purrub* is a sort of festival held in honour of the native Diana—the *chumpa buttee* before referred to. On the appointed day all the males in the forest villages, without exception, go a-hunting. Old spears are furbished up; miraculous guns, of even yet more ancient lineage than Mehrman Singh's dangerous flintpiece, are brought out from dusty hiding-places. Battle-axes, bows and arrows, hatchets, clubs and weapons of all sorts, are looked up, and the motley crowd hies to the forest, the one party beating up the game to the other.

Some go fishing, others try to secure a quail or partridge, but it is a point of honour that something must be slain. If game be not plentiful they will even go to another village and

slay a goat, which, rather than return empty-handed, they will bear in triumph home. The women meet the returning hunters, and if there has been a fortunate beat, there is a great feast in the village during the evening and far on into the night. The nets are used, and in this way they generally have some game to divide in the village on their return from the hunt. Ordinarily they seethe the flesh, and pour the whole contents of the cooking-pot into a mess of boiled rice. With the addition of a little salt, this is to them very palatable fare. They are very good cooks, with very simple appliances; with a little mustard oil or clarified butter, a few vegetables or a cut-up fish, they can be very successful. The food, however, is generally smoked from the cow-dung fire. If you are much out in these villages this smoke constantly hangs about, clinging to your clothes and flavouring your food, but the natives seem to like it amazingly.

In the cold mornings of December or January it hangs about like the peat smoke in a Highland village. Round every house are great stacks and piles of cow-dung cakes. Before every house is a huge pile of ashes, and the villagers cower round this as the evening falls, or before the sun has dissipated the mist of the mornings. During the day the village dogs burrow in the ashes. Hovering in a dense cloud about the roofs and eaves, and along the lower branches of the trees in filmy layers, the smoke almost chokes one to ride through it. I have seen a native sit till half-choked in a dense column of this smoke. He is too lazy to shift his position; the fumes of pungent smoke half smother him; tears run from his eyes; he splutters and coughs, and abuses the smoke, and its grandfather, and maternal uncle, and all its other known relatives; but he prefers semi-suffocation to the trouble of budging an inch.

Sometimes the energy of these people is surprising. To go to a fair or feast, or on a pilgrimage, they will walk miles upon miles, subsisting on parched peas or rice, and carrying

heavy burdens. In company they sing and carol blithely enough. When alone they are very taciturn, man and woman walking together, the man first with his *lathee* or staff, the woman behind carrying child or bundle, and often looking fagged and tired enough.

Taking vegetables, or rice, or other commodities to the bazaar, the carrier often slings his burden to the two ends of a pole worn over the shoulder, much as Chinamen do. But they generally make their load into one bundle which they carry on the head, or which they sling, if not large and bulky, over their backs, rolled up in one of their cloths.

During the rice-planting season they toil in mud and water from earliest morn till late into twilight. Bending and stooping all the day, their lower extremities up to the knee sometimes in water, and the scorching sun beating on their backs, they certainly show their patient plodding industry, for it is downright honest hard work.

The young rice is taken from the nursery patch, where it has been sown thick some time previously. When the rice-field is ready—a sloppy, muddy, embanked little quagmire—the ryot gets his bundle of young rice-plants, and shoves in two or three at a time with his finger and thumb. These afterwards form the tufts of rice. Its growth is very rapid. Sometimes, in case of flood, the rice actually grows with the rise of the water, always keeping its tip above the stream. If wholly submerged for any length of time it dies. There are over a hundred varieties. Some are only suited for very deep marshy soils; others, such as the *sătee*, or sixty-days rice, can be grown on comparatively high land, and ripen early. If rain be scanty, the *sătee* and other rice crops have to be weeded. It is cut with a jagged-edged sort of reaping-hook called a *hussooa*. The cut bundles are carried from the fields by women, girls, and lads. They could not take carts in many instances into the swamps.

At such times you see every little dyke or embankment

with a crowd of bustling villagers, each with a heavy bundle of grain on his head, hurrying to and fro like a stream of busy ants. The women, with clothes tucked up above the knee, plod and plash through the water. They go at a half run, a kind of fast trot, and hardly a word is spoken—garnering the rice crops is too important an operation to dawdle and gossip over. Each hurries off with his burden to the little family threshing-floor, dumps down his load, gives a weary grunt, straightens his back, gives a yawn, then off again to the field for another load. It is no use leaving a bundle on the field; where food is so eagerly looked for by such a dense population, where there are hungry mouths and empty stomachs in every village, a bundle of rice would be gone by the morning.

As in Greece, where every man has to watch his vineyard, so here, the *kurechan* or threshing-floor each has its watchman at night. For the protection of the growing crops, the villagers club together, and appoint a watchman or *chowkeydar*, whom they pay by giving him a small percentage on the yield; or a small fractional proportion of the area he has to guard, with its standing crop, may be made over to him as a recompense.

They thresh out the rice, when it has matured a little, on the threshing-floor. Four to six bullocks are tied in a line to a post in the centre, and round this they slowly pace in a circle. They are not muzzled, and the poor brutes seem rather to enjoy the unwonted luxury of feeding while they work. When there is a good wind, the grain is winnowed; it is lifted either in bamboo scoops or in the two hands. The wind blows the chaff or *bhoosa* on to a heap, and the fine fresh rice remains behind. The grain merchants now do a good business. Rice must be sold to pay the rent, the money-lender, and other clamouring creditors. The *bunniahs* will take repayment in kind. They put on the interest, and cheat in the weighments and measurements. So much has

to be given to the weighman as a perquisite. If seed had been borrowed, it has now to be returned at a ruinous rate of interest. Some seed must be saved for next year, and an average *poor* ryot, the cultivator of but a little holding, very soon sees the result of his harvesting melt away, leaving little for wife and little ones to live on. He never gets free of the money-lender. He will have to go out and work hard for others, as well as get up his own little lands. No chance of a new bullock this year, and the old ones are getting worn out and thin. The wife must dispense with her promised ornament or dress. For the poor ryot it is a miserable hand-to-mouth existence when crops are poor. As a rule he is never out of debt. He lives on the scantiest fare; hunger often pinches him; he knows none of the luxuries of life. Notwithstanding, the majority are patient, frugal, industrious, and to the full extent of their scanty means even charitable and benevolent. With the average ryot a little kindness goes a great way. There are some irreconcileable, discontented, worthless fellows in every village. All more or less count a lie as rather a good thing to be expert in; they lie naturally, simply, and instinctively; but with all his faults, and they are doubtless many, I confess to a great liking for the average Hindoo ryot.

At times, however, their apathy and laziness is amazing. They are very childish, pettish, and easily roused. In a quarrel, however, they generally confine themselves to vituperation and abuse, and seldom come to blows.

As an instance of their fatalism or apathetic indolence, I can remember a village on the estate I was managing taking fire. It was quite close to the factory. I had my pony saddled at once, and galloped off for the burning village. It was a long, straggling one, with a good masonry well in the centre, shadowed by a mighty *peepul* tree. The wind was blowing the fire right along, and if no obstruction was offered, would sweep off every hut in the place. The only soul who

was trying to do a thing was a young Brahmin watchman belonging to the factory. He had succeeded in removing some brass jars of his own, and was saving some grain. One woman was rocking to and fro, beating her breast and crying. There sat the rest of the apathetic villagers in groups, not lifting a finger, not stirring a step, but calmly looking on while the devouring element was licking up hut after hut, and destroying their little all. In a few minutes some of my servants, syces, and factory men had arrived. I tied up the pony, ordered my men to pull down a couple of huts in the centre, and tried to infuse some energy into the villagers. Not a bit of it: they would *not* stir. They would not even draw a bucket of water. However my men got earthen pots; I dug up fresh earth and threw it on the two dismantled huts, dragging away as much of the thatch and *débris* as we could.

The fire licked our faces, and actually got a footing on the first house beyond the frail opening we had tried to make, but we persevered, and ultimately stayed the fire, and saved about two-thirds of the village. I never saw such an instance of complete apathy. Some of the inhabitants even had not untied the cattle in the sheds. They seemed quite prostrated. However as we worked on, and they began to see that all was not yet lost, they began to buckle to; yet even then their principal object was to save their brass pots and cooking utensils—things that could not possibly burn, and which they might have left alone with perfect safety.

A Hindoo village is as inflammable as touchwood. The houses are generally built of grass walls, connected with thin battens of bamboo. The roof is bamboo and thatch. Thatch fences surround all the little courtyards. Leaves, refuse, cow-dung fuel, and wood are piled up round every hut. At each door is an open-air fire, which smoulders all day. A stray puff of wind makes an inquisitive visit round the corner, and before one can half realise the catastrophe, the village is on

fire. Then each only thinks of his own goods; there is no combined effort to stay the flames. In the hot west winds of March, April, and May, these fires are of very frequent occurrence. In Bhaugulpore, I have seen from my verandah three villages on fire at one and the same time. In some parts of Oudh, among the sal forests, village after village is burnt down annually, and I have seen the same catastrophe visit the same village several times in the course of one year. These fires arise from pure carelessness, sheer apathy, and laziness.

Sanitary precautions too are very insufficient; practically there are none. Huge unsightly waterholes, filled during the rains with the drainage of all the dung-heaps and mounds of offal and filth that abound in the village, swelter under the hot summer sun. They get covered with a rank green scum, and if their inky depths be stirred, the foulest and most fearful odours issue forth. In these filthy pools the villagers often perform their ablutions; they do not scruple to drink the putrid water, which is no doubt a hotbed and regular nursery for fevers, and choleraic and other disorders.

Many home readers are but little acquainted with the Indian village system, and I shall devote a chapter to the description of a Hindoo village, with its functionaries, its institutions, its inhabitants, and the more marked of their customs and avocations.

CHAPTER XIII.

Description of a native village—Village functionaries—The barber—Bathing habits—The village well—The school—The children—The village bazaar—The landowner and his dwelling—The "Putwarrie" or village accountant—The blacksmith—The "Punchayiet" or village jury system—Our legal system in India—Remarks on the administration of justice.

A TYPICAL village in Behar is a heterogeneous collection of thatched huts, apparently set down at random—as indeed it is, for every one erects his hut wherever whim or caprice leads him, or wherever he can get a piece of vacant land. Groves of feathery bamboos and broad-leaved plumy-looking plantains almost conceal the huts and buildings. Several small orchards of mango surround the village; the roads leading to and from it are merely well-worn cattle tracks—in the rains a perfect quagmire, and in the hot weather dusty and confined between straggling hedges of aloe or prickly pear. These hedges are festooned with masses of clinging luxuriant creepers, among which sometimes struggles up a custard apple, an avocado pear, or a wild plum-tree. The latter is a prickly straggling tree called the *bhyre;* the wood is very hard, and is often used for making ploughs. The fruit is a little hard yellow crisp fruit with a big stone inside and very sweet; when it is ripe, the village urchins throw sticks up among the branches, and feast on the golden shower.

On many of the banks bordering the roads, thatching grass or rather strong upright waving grass, with a beautiful feathery plume, is planted. This is used to make the walls

of the houses, and these are then plastered outside and in with clay and cow-dung. The tall hedge of dense grass keeps what little breeze there may be away from the traveller. The road is something like an Irish "Boreen," wanting only its beauty and freshness. On a hot day the atmosphere in one of these village roads is stifling and loaded with dust.

These houses with their grass walls and thatched roof are called *cutcha*, as opposed to more pretentious structures of burnt brick, with maybe a tiled sloping or flat plastered roof, which are called *pucca*. *Pucca* literally means "ripe," as opposed to *cutcha*, "unripe"; but the rich Oriental tongue has adapted it to almost every kind of secondary meaning. Thus a man who is true, upright, respected, a man to be depended on, is called a *pucca* man. It is a word in constant use among Anglo-Indians. A *pucca* road is one which is bridged and metalled. If you make an engagement with a friend, and he wants to impress you with its importance, he will ask you, "Now is that *pucca?*" and so on.

Other houses in the village are composed of unburnt bricks cemented with mud, or maybe composed of mud walls and thatched roof; these, being a compound sort of erection, are called *cutcha pucca*. In the *cutcha* houses live the poorer castes, the *Chumars* or workers in leathers, the *Moosahurs*, *Doosadhs*, or *Gwallahs*.

The *Domes*, or scavengers, feeders on offal, have to live apart in a *tolah*, which might be called a small suburb, by themselves. The *Domes* drag from the village any animal that happens to die. They generally pursue the handicraft of basket making, or mat making, and the *Dome tolah* can always be known by the pigs and fowls prowling about in search of food, and the *Dome* and his family splitting up bamboo, and weaving mats and baskets at the doors of their miserable habitation. To the higher castes both pigs and fowls are unclean and an abomination. *Moosahurs*, *Doosadhs*, and other poor castes, such as *Dangurs*, keep, however, an army

of gaunt, lean, hungry-looking pigs. These may be seen rooting and wallowing in the marshes when the rice has been cut, or foraging among the mango groves, to pick up any stray unripe fruit that may have escaped the keen eyes of the hungry and swarming children.

There is yet another small *tolah* or suburb, called the *Kusbee tolah.* Here live the miserable outcasts who minister to the worst passions of our nature. These degraded beings are banished from the more respectable portions of the community; but here, as in our own highly civilised and favoured land, vice hovers by the side of virtue, and the Hindoo village contains the same elements of happiness and misery, profligacy and probity, purity and degradation, as the fine home cities that are a name in the mouths of men.

Every village forms a perfect little commonwealth; it contains all the elements of self-existence; it is quite a little commune, so far as social life is concerned. There is a hereditary blacksmith, washerman, potter, barber, and writer. The *dhobee,* or washerman, can always be known by the propinquity of his donkeys, diminutive animals which he uses to transport his bundle of unsavoury dirty clothes to the pool or tank where the linen is washed. On great country roads you may often see strings of donkeys laden with bags of grain, which they transport from far-away villages to the big bazaars; but if you see a laden donkey near a village, be sure the *dhobee* is not far off.

Here as elsewhere the *hajam,* or barber, is a great gossip, and generally a favourite. He uses no soap, and has a most uncouth-looking razor, yet he shaves the heads, beards, moustaches, and armpits of his customers with great deftness. The lower classes of natives shave the hair of the head and of the armpits for the sake of cleanliness and for other obvious reasons. The higher classes are very regular in their ablutions; every morning, be the water cold or warm,

the Rajpoot and Brahmin, the respectable middle classes, and all in the village who lay any claim to social position, have their *goosal* or bath. Some hie to the nearest tank or stream; at all hours of the day, at any ferry or landing stage, you will see swarthy fine-looking fellows up to mid waist in the water, scrubbing vigorously their bronzed arms, and neck and chest. They clean their teeth with the end of a stick, which they chew at one extremity, till they loosen the fibres, and with this improvised toothbrush and some wood ashes for paste, they make the teeth look as white and clean as ivory.

There is generally a large masonry well in the middle of the village, with a broad smooth *pucca* platform all round it. It has been built by some former father of the hamlet, to perpetuate his memory, to fulfil a vow to the gods, perhaps simply from goodwill to his fellow townsmen. At all events there is generally one such in every village. It is generally shadowed by a huge *bhur*, *peepul*, or tamarind tree. Here may always be seen the busiest sight in the village. Pretty young women chatter, laugh, and talk, and assume all sorts of picturesque attitudes as they fill their waterpots; the village matrons gossip, and sometimes quarrel, as they pull away at the windlass over the deep cool well. On the platform are a group of fat Brahmins nearly nude, their lighter skins contrasting well with the duskier hue of the lower classes. There are several groups. With damp drapery clinging to their glistening skins, they pour brass pots of cold water over their dripping bodies; they rub themselves briskly, and gasp again as the cool element pours over head and shoulders. They sit down while some young attendant or relation vigorously rubs them down the back; while sitting they clean their feet. Thus, amid much laughing and talking, and quaint gestures, and not a little expectoration, they perform their ablutions. Not unfrequently the more wealthy anoint their bodies with mustard oil, which at all events keeps out

cold and chill, as they claim that it does, though it is not fragrant. Round the well you get all the village news and scandal. It is always thronged in the mornings and evenings, and only deserted when the fierce heat of midday plunges the village into a lethargic silence; unbroken save where the hum of the hand-mill, or the thump of the husking-post, tells where some busy damsel or matron is grinding flour, or husking rice, in the cool shadow of her hut, for the wants of her lord and master.

Education is now making rapid strides; it is fostered by government, and many of the wealthier landowners or Zemindars subscribe liberally for a schoolmaster in their villages. Near the principal street then, in a sort of lane, shadowed by an old mango-tree, we come on the village school. The little fellows have all discarded their upper clothes on account of the heat, and with much noise, swaying the body backwards and forwards, and monotonously intoning, they grind away at the mill of learning, and try to get a knowledge of books. Other dusky urchins figure away with lumps of chalk on the floor, or on flat pieces of wood to serve as copy-books. The din increases as the stranger passes: going into an English school, the stranger would probably cause a momentary pause in the hum that is always heard in school. The little Hindoo scholar probably wishes to impress you with a sense of his assiduity. He raises his voice, sways the body more briskly, keeps his one eye firmly fixed on his task, while with the other he throws a keen swift glance over you, which embraces every detail of your costume, and not improbably includes a shrewd estimate of your disposition and character.

Hindoo children never seem to me to be boys or girls; they are preternaturally acute and observant. You seldom see them playing together. They seem to be born with the gift of telling a lie with most portentous gravity. They wear an air of the most winning candour and guileless

innocence, when they are all the while plotting some petty scheme against you. They are certainly far more precocious than English children; they realise the hard struggle for life far more quickly. The poorer classes can hardly be said to have any childhood; as soon as they can toddle they are sent to weed, cut grass, gather fuel, tend herds, or do anything that will bring them in a small pittance, and ease the burden of the struggling parents. I think the children of the higher and middle classes very pretty; they have beautiful dark, thoughtful eyes, and a most intelligent expression. Very young babies however are miserably nursed; their hair is allowed to get all tangled and matted into unsightly knots; their faces are seldom washed, and their eyes are painted with antimony about the lids, and are often rheumy and running with water. The use of the pocket handkerchief is sadly neglected.

There is generally one open space or long street in our village, and in a hamlet of any importance there is weekly or bi-weekly a bazaar or market. From early morning in all directions, from solitary huts in the forest, from struggling little crofts in the rice lands, from fishermen's dwellings perched on the bank of the river, from lonely camps in the grass jungle where the herd and his family live with their cattle, from all the petty thorpes about, come the women with their baskets of vegetables, their bundles of spun yarn, their piece of woven cloth, whatever they have to sell or barter. There is a lad with a pair of wooden shoes, which he has fashioned as he was tending the village cows; another with a grass mat, or bamboo staff, or some other strange outlandish-looking article, which he hopes to barter in the bazaar for something on which his heart is set. The *bunniahs* hurry up their tottering, over-laden ponies; the rice merchant twists his patient bullock's tail to make it move faster: the cloth merchant with his bale under his arm and measuring stick in hand, walks briskly along. Here

comes a gang of charcoal-burners, with their loads of fuel slung on poles dangling from their shoulders. A *box wallah* with his attendant coolie, staggering under the weight of a huge box of Manchester goods, hurries by. It is a busy sight in the bazaar. What a cackling! What a confused clatter of voices! Here also the women are the chief contributors to the din of tongues. There is no irate husband here or moody master to tell them to be still. Spread out on the ground are heaps of different grain, bags of flour, baskets of meal, pulse, or barley; sweetmeats occupy the attention of nearly all the buyers. All Hindoos indulge in sweets, which take the place of beer with us; instead of a "nobbler," they offer you a "lollipop." Trinkets, beads, bracelets, armlets, and anklets of pewter, there are in great bunches; fruits, vegetables, sticks of cane, skins full of oil, and sugar, and treacle. Stands with fresh "paun" leaves, and piles of coarse-looking masses of tobacco are largely patronised. It is like a hive of bees. The dust hovers over the moving mass; the smells are various, none of them "blest odours of sweet Araby." Drugs, condiments, spices, shoes, in fact, everything that a rustic population can require, is here. The *pice* jingle as they change hands; the haggling and chaffering are without parallel in any market at home. Here is a man apparently in the last madness of intense passion, in fierce altercation with another, who tries his utmost to outbluster his furious declamation. In a moment they are smiling, and to all appearance the best friends in the world. The bargain has been concluded; it was all about whether the one could give three *brinjals* or four for one pice. It is a scene of indescribable bustle, noise, and confusion. By evening, however, all will have been packed up again, and only the faint outlines of yet floating clouds of dust, and the hopping, cheeky crows, picking up the scattered litter and remnants of the market, will remain to tell that it has been bazaar day in our village.

Generally, about the centre of it, there is a more pretentious structure, with verandahs supported on wooden pillars. High walls surround a rather commodious court-yard. There are mysterious little doors, through which you can get a peep of crooked little stairs leading to the upper rooms or to the roof, from dusky inside verandahs. Half-naked, listless, indolent figures lie about, or walk slowly to and from the yard, with seemingly purposeless indecision. In the outer verandah is an old *palkee*, with evidences in the tarnished gilding and frayed and tattered hangings, that it once had some pretensions to fashionable elegance.

The walls of the buildings however are sadly cracked, and numerous young *peepul* trees grow in the crevices, their insidious roots creeping farther and farther into the fissures, and expediting the work of decay, which is everywhere apparent. It is the residence of the Zemindar, the lord of the village, the owner of the lands adjoining. Probably he is descended from some noble house of ancient lineage. His forefathers, possibly, led armed retainers against some rival in yonder far off village, where the dim outlines of a mud fort yet tell of the insecurity of the days of old. Now he is old, and fat, and lazy. Possibly he has been too often to the money-lender. His lands are mortgaged to their full value. Though they respect and look up to their old Zemindar, the villagers are getting independent; they are not so humble, and pay less and less of feudal tribute than in the old days, when the golden palanquin was new, when the elephant had splendid housings, when mace, and javelin, and match-lock men followed in his train. Alas! the elephant was sold long ago, and is now the property of a wealthy *Bunniah* who has amassed money in the buying and selling of grain and oil. The Zemindar may be a man of progress and intelligence, but many are of this broken-down and helpless type.

Holding the lands of the village by hereditary right, by grant, conquest, or purchase, he collects his rents from the villages through a small staff of *peons*, or un-official police. The accounts are kept by another important village functionary—the *putwarrie*, or village accountant. *Putwarries* belong to the writer or *Kayasth* caste. They are probably as clever, and at the same time as unscrupulous as any class in India. They manage the most complicated accounts between ryot and landlord with great skill. Their memories are wonderful, but they can always forget conveniently. Where ryots are numerous, the landlord's wants pressing, and frequent calls made on the tenantry for payment, often made in various kinds of grain and produce, the rates and prices of which are constantly changing, it is easy to imagine the complications and intricacies of a *putwarrie's* account. Each ryot pretty accurately remembers his own particular indebtedness, but woe to him if he pays the *putwarrie* the value of a "red cent" without taking a receipt. Certainly there may be a really honest *putwarrie*, but I very much doubt it. The name stands for chicanery and robbery. On the one hand, the landlord is constantly stirring him up for money, questioning his accounts, and putting him not unfrequently to actual bodily coercion. The ryot, on the other hand, is constantly inventing excuses, getting up delays, and propounding innumerable reasons why he cannot pay. He will try to forge receipts, he [illegible] get up false evidence that he has already paid, a[illegible] wretched *putwarrie* needs all his native and [illegible] sharpness to hold his own. But all ryots are not [illegible] when the *putwarrie* gets hold of some unwary [illegible] bumpkin whom he can plunder, he *does* [illegible] systematically. All cowherds are popularl[illegible] cattle lifters, and a *putwarrie* after he has [illegible] of infancy, and has been indoctrinated [illegible] that his elders can teach him, is su[illegible]

highest category of villains. A popular proverb, much used in Behar, says:—

> "Unda poortee, Cowa maro!
> Jinnum me, billar:
> Bara burris me, Kayasth mariye!!
> Humesha mara gwar!!"

This is translated thus: "When the shell is breaking kill the crow, and the wild cat at its birth." A *Kayasth*, writer, or *putwarrie*, may be allowed to live till he is twelve years old, at which time he is sure to have learned rascality. Then kill him; but kill *gwars* or cowherds any time, for they are invariably rascals. There is a deal of grim bucolic humour in this, and it very nearly hits the truth.

The *putwarrie*, then, is an important personage. He has his *cutcherry*, or office, where he and his tribe (for there are always numbers of his fellow caste men who help him in his books and accounts) squat on their mat on the ground. Each possesses the instruments of his calling in the shape of a small brass ink-pot, and an oblong box containing a knife, pencil, and several reeds for pens. Each has a bundle of papers and documents before him, this is called his *busta*, and contains all the papers he uses. There they sit, and have fierce squabbles with the tenantry. There is always some noise about a putwarrie's cutcherry. He has generally ome half dozen quarrels on hand, but he trusts to his pen, tongue, and clever brain. He is essentially a man of hating physical contests, delighting in a keen argument, ncounter with a plotting, calculating brain. Another ys that the putwarrie has as much chance of oldier as a sheep has of success in attacking a

lacksmith, is very unlike his prototype at sounding anvil, no dusky shop, with the ted iron lighting up its dim recesses. one of Longfellow's beautiful poem.

...ar sits in the open air. His hammers and other im-...nts of trade are very primitive. Like all native handi-...smen he sits down at his work. His bellows are made ...two loose bags of sheepskin, lifted alternately by the ...tendant coolie. As they lift they get inflated with air; they are then sharply forced down on their own folds, and the contained air ejected forcibly through an iron or clay nozzle, into the very small heap of glowing charcoal which forms the fire. His principal work is making and sharpening the uncouth-looking ploughshares, which look more like flat blunt chisels than anything else. They also make and keep in repair the *hussowahs*, or serrated sickles, with which the crops are cut. They are slow at their task, but many of them are ingenious workers in metal. They are very imitative, and I have seen many English tools and even gun-locks, made by a common native village blacksmith, that could not be surpassed in delicacy of finish by any English smith. It is foreign to our ideas of the brawny blacksmith, to hear that he sits to his work, but this is the invariable custom. Even carpenters and masons squat down to theirs. Cheap labour is but an arbitrary term, and a country smith at home might do the work of ten or twelve men in India; but it is just as well to get an idea of existing differences. On many of the factories there are very intelligent *mistrees*, which is the term for the master blacksmith. These men, getting but twenty-four to thirty shillings a month, and supplying themselves with food and clothing, are nevertheless competent to wor... all the machinery, attend to the engine, and do all the ir... work necessary for the factory. They will superintend... staff of blacksmiths; and if the sewing-machine of the ... *sahib*, the gun-lock of the *burra sahib*, the lawn... English pump, or other machine gets out of orde... any metal work, the *mistree* is called in, and... competent to put things to rights.

As I have said, every village is a self-cor...

mune. All trades necessary to supplying the wants villagers are represented in it. Besides the profits fron actual calling, nearly every man, except the daily labou has a little bit of land which he farms, so as to eke out l scanty income. All possess a cow or two, a few goats, an probably a pair of plough-bullocks.

When a dispute arises in the village, should a person be suspected of theft, should his cattle trespass on his neighbour's growing crop, should he libel some one against whom he has a grudge, or, proceeding to stronger measures, take the law into his own hands and assault him, the aggrieved party complains to the head man of the village. In every village the head man is the fountain of justice. He holds his office sometimes by right of superior wealth, or intelligence, or hereditary succession, not unfrequently by the unanimous wish of his fellow-villagers. On a complaint being made to him, he summons both parties and their witnesses. The complainant is then allowed to nominate two men, to act as assessors or jurymen on his behalf, his nominations being liable to challenge by the opposite party. The defendant next names two to act on his behalf, and if these are agreed to by both parties, these four, with the head man, form what is called a *punchayiet*, or council of five, in fact, a jury. They examine the witnesses, and each party to the suit conducts his own case. The whole village not unfrequently attends to hear what goes on. In a mere caste or ivate quarrel, only the friends of the parties will attend. ry case is tried in public, and all the inhabitants of the e can hear the proceedings if they wish. Respectable nts can remark on the proceedings, make suggestions, n opinion. Public feeling is thus pretty accurately sted, and the *punchayiet* agree among themselves To the honour of their character for fair play the decision of a *punchayiet* is generally seldom appealed against. Our compli-

...m of law, with its delays, its technicalities, its ...ies, and above all its expense, its stamp duties, its ...s, its bribes to native underlings, and the innumer... ...ations attendant on the administration of justice in ...evenue and criminal courts, are repugnant to the villager ...Hindostan. They are very litigious, and believe in our ...ire to give them justice and protection to life and property; ...t our courts are far too costly, our machinery of justice is ...ar too intricate and complicated for a people like the Hindoos. "Justice within the gate" is what they want. It is quite enough admission of the reality of our rule—that we are the paramount power—that they submit a case to us at all; and all impediments in the way of their getting cheap and speedy justice should be done away with. A codification of existing laws, a sweeping away of one half the forms and technicalities that at present bewilder the applicant for justice, and altogether a less legal and more equitable procedure, having a due regard to efficiency and the conservation of Imperial interests, should be the aim of our Indian rulers. More especially should this be the case in rural districts where large interests are concerned, where cases involve delicate points of law. Our present courts, divested of their hungry crowd of middlemen and retainers, are right enough; but I would like to see rural courts for petty cases established, presided over by leading natives, planters, merchants, and men of probity, which would in a measure supplement the *punchayiet* system, which would be easy of access, cheap in their procedure, and with all the impress... authority. It is a question I merely glance at, as it does ... come within the scope of a book like this; but it is ... known to every planter and European who has come ... in contact with the rural classes of Hindostan, tha... a vast amount of smouldering disaffection, of ... dislike to, and contempt of, our present cu... machinery of law and justice.

If a villager wishes to level a withering sarc[asm] head of a plausible, talkative fellow, all promise performance, ready with tongue but not with purse or he calls him a *vakeel*, that is, a lawyer. If he has his heels in your office, or round the factory to get some business done, to neglect his work, to get his rent or prod account investigated, wherever there is worry, trouble, dela or difficulty about anything concerning the relations betwee himself and the factory, the deepest and keenest expression of discontent and disgust his versatile and acute imagination can suggest, or his fluent tongue give utterance to, is, that this is "Adawlut ka mafick," that is, "like a court of justice." Could there be a stronger commentary on our judicial institutions?

The world is waking up now rapidly from the lethargic sleep of ages. Men's minds are keenly alive to what is passing; communications are much improved; the dissemination of news is rapid; the old race of besotted, ignorant tenants, and grasping, avaricious, domineering tyrants of landlords is fast dying out; and there could be no difficulty in establishing such village or district courts as I have indicated. All educated respectable Europeans with a stake in the country should be made Justices of the Peace, with limited powers to try petty cases. There is a vast material —loyalty, educated minds, an honest desire to do justice, independence, and a genuine scorn of everything pettifogging and underhand—that the Indian Government would do well utilise. The best friend of the Baboo cannot acquit him tendency to temporise, a hankering after finesse, a tal facility to fall under pecuniary temptation. The l gentleman planter of the present day is above nd before showering titles and honours on native levating them to the bench, and deluging the em, it might be worth our rulers' while to utilise, the experience, loyalty, honour, and

e of our countrymen who might be willing
services at the disposal of Government.
Indians" is a very good cry; it sounds well;
not do to push it to its logical issue. Unless
an govern India wisely and well, in accordance
dern national ideas, they have no more right to India
Hottentots have to the Cape, or the black fellows to
alia. In my opinion, Hindoos would never govern
dostan half, quarter, nay, one tithe as well as English-
n. Make more of your Englishmen in India then, make
not less of your Baboo if you please, but make more of your
Englishmen. Keep them loyal and content. Treat them
kindly and liberally. One Englishman, contented, loyal,
and industrious in an Indian district, is a greater pillar of
strength to the Indian Government than ten dozen Baboos
or Zemindars, let them have as many titles, decorations,
university degrees, or certificates of loyalty from junior
civilians as they may. Not India for the Indians, but
India for Imperial Britain say I.

CHAPTER XIV.

A native village continued—The watchman or "chowkeydar"—temple—Brahmins—Idols—Religion—Humility of the poorer class—Their low condition—Their apathy—The police—Their extortion and knavery—An instance of police rascality—Corruption of native officials—The Hindoo unfit for self-government.

ONE more important functionary we have yet to notice, the watchman or *chawkeydar*. He is generally a *Doosadh*, or other low caste man, and perambulates the village at night, at intervals uttering a loud cry or a fierce howl, which is caught up and echoed by all the *chowkeydars* of the neighbouring villages. It is a weird, strange sound, cry after cry echoing far away, distance beyond distance, till it fades into faintness. At times it is not an unmusical cry, but when he howls out close to your tent, waking you from your first dreamless sleep, you do not feel it to be so. The *chowkeydar* has to see that no thieves enter the village by night. He protects the herds and property of the villagers. If a theft crime occurs, he must at once report it to the nearest station. If you lose your way by night, you shout out nearest *chowkeydar*, and he is bound to pass you on village. These men get a small gratuity from but the villagers also pay them a small sum, ss according to individual means. The *chow-* a ragged, swarthy fellow with long matted nd staff, and always a blue *puggree*. colour. Sometimes he has a brass , a curved, blunt weapon, the hat scarcely an Englishman's It is more for show than

use, and in thousands of cases it has become so fixed in the scabbard that it cannot be drawn.

In the immediate vicinity of each village, and often in the village itself, is a small temple, sacred to Vishnu or Shiva. It is often perched high up on some bank, overlooking the lake or village tank. Generally there is some umbrageous old tree overshadowing the sacred fane, and seated near, reclining in the shade, are several oleaginous old Brahmins. If the weather be hot, they generally wear only the *dhotee* or loin cloth made of fine linen or cotton, and hanging about the legs in not ungraceful folds. The Brahmin can be told by his sacred thread worn round the neck over the shoulder. His skin is much fairer than the majority of his fellow villagers. It is not unfrequently a pale golden olive, and I have seen them as fair as many Europeans. They are intelligent men, with acute minds, but lazy and self-indulgent. Frequently the village Brahmin is simply a sensual voluptuary. This is not the time or place to descant on their religion, which, with many gross practices, contains not a little that is pure and beautiful. The common idea at home that they are miserable pagans, "bowing down to stocks and stones," is, like many of the accepted ideas about India, very much exaggerated. That the masses, the crude uneducated Hindoos, place some faith in the idol, and expect in some mysterious way that it will influence their fate for good or evil, is not to be denied, but the more intelligent natives, and most of the Brahmins, only look on the idol as a visible sign and symbol of the divinity. They want a vehicle to carry their thoughts upwards to G[illegible] and the idol is a means to assist their thoughts heaven[illegible] As works of art their idols are not equal to the fine [illegible] and other symbols of the Greeks or the Roman Cat[illegible] they serve the same purpose. Where the vi[illegible] poor, and no pious founder has perpetuated [illegible] done honour to the gods by erecting a t[illegible]

content themselves with a rough mud shrine, which they visit at intervals and daub with red paint. They deposit flowers, pour libations of water or milk, and in other ways strive to shew that a religious impulse is stirring within them. So far as I have observed, however, the vast mass of the poor toilers in India have practically little or no religion. Material wants are too pressing. They may have some dumb, vague aspirations after a higher and a holier life, but the fight for necessaries, for food, raiment, and shelter, is too incessant for them to indulge much in contemplation. They have a dim idea of a future life, but none of them can give you anything but a very unsatisfactory idea of their religion. They observe certain forms and ceremonies, because their fathers did, and because the Brahmins tell them. Of real, vital, practical religion, as we know it, they have little or no knowledge. Ask any common labourer or one of the low castes about immortality, about salvation, about the higher virtues, about the yearnings and wishes that every immortal soul at periods has, and he will simply tell you, "Khoda jane, hum gureeb admi," i.e. "God knows; I am only a poor man!" There they take refuge always when you ask them anything puzzling. If you are rating them for a fault, asking them to perform a complicated task, or inquiring your way in a strange neighbourhood, the first answer you get will ten to one, be "Hum gureeb admi." It is said almost instinctively, and no doubt in many cases is the refuge of simple disinclination to think the matter out. Pure laziness suggests it. It is too much trouble to frame an answer, or give the desired formation, and the "gureeb admi" comes naturally to the It is often deprecatory, meaning "I am ignorant and med, you must not expect too much from a poor, ltivated man like me." It is often, also, a delicate y, which is truly Oriental, implying, and often tone, a look, a gesture, that though the b," poor, humble, despised, it is only by

Vincent Brooks, Day & Son, Lith.

Bull rhinoceros. A glorious prize.

Vincent Brooks, Day & Son, Lith.

contrast to you, the questioner, who are mighty, exalted, and powerful. For downright fawning obsequiousness, or delicate, implied, fine-strung, subtle flattery, I will back a Hindoo sycophant against the courtier or place-hunter of every other nation. It is very annoying at times, if you are in a hurry, and particularly want a direct answer to a plain question, to hear the old old story, "I am a poor man," but there is nothing for it but patience. You must ask again plainly and kindly. The poorer classes are easily flurried; they will always give what information they have if kindly spoken to, but you must not fluster them. You must rouse their minds to think, and let them fairly grasp the purport of your inquiry, for they are very suspicious, often pondering over your object, carefully considering all the pros and cons as to your motive, inclination, or your position. Many try to give an answer that they think would be pleasing to you. If they think you are weary and tired, and you ask your distance from the place you may be wishing to reach, they will ridiculously underestimate the length of road. A man may have all the cardinal virtues, but if they think you do not like him, and you ask his character, they will paint him to you blacker than Satan himself. It is very hard to get the plain unvarnished truth from a Hindoo. Many, indeed, are almost incapable of giving an intelligent answer to any question that does not nearly concern their own private and purely personal interests. They have a sordid, grubbing, vegetating life; many of them indeed are but little above the brute creation. They have no idea beyond the supply of the mere animal wants of the moment. The future never troubles them. They live their hard, unlovely lives, and experien few pleasures and no surprises. They have few regrets minds are mere blanks, and life is one long continued with nature for bare subsistence. What wond they are fatalists? They do not speculate on t existence, they are content to be, to labour,

when their time comes like a dog, because it is *Kismet*—their fate. Many of them never strive to avert any impending calamity, such, for example, as sickness. A man sickens, he wraps himself in stolid apathy, he makes no effort to shake off his malady, he accepts it with sullen, despairing, pathetic resignation as his fate. His friends mourn in their dumb, despairing way, but they too accept the situation. He has no one to rouse him. If you ask him what is the matter, he only wails out, "Hum kya kurre?" "What can I do? I am unwell." No attempt whatever to tell you of the origin of his illness, no wish even for sympathy or assistance. He accepts the fact of his illness. He struggles not with Fate. It is so ordained. Why fight against it? "Amen; so let it be." I have often been saddened to see poor toiling tenants struck down in this way. Even if you give them medicine, they often have not energy enough to take it. You must see them take it before your eyes. It is *your* struggle, not theirs. You must rouse them, by *your* will. *Your* energy must compel them to make an attempt to combat their weakness. Once you rouse a man, and infuse some spirit into him, he may resist his disease, but it is a hard fight to get him to TRY. What a meaning in that one word TRY! TO ACT. TO DO. The average poor suffering native Hindoo knows nothing of it.

Of course their moods vary. They have their "high days and holidays," feasts, processions, and entertainments; but on the whole the average ryot or small cultivator has a hard life.

In every village there are generally bits of uncultivated or jungle lands, on which the village herds have a right of pasture. The cow being a sacred animal, they only use her calves, milk and butter. The urchins may be seen in the morning driving long strings of emaciated-looking animals to the pasture, which in the evening wend their weary way through the choking dust, having had but

"short commons" all the day on the parched and scanty herbage.

The police are too often a source of annoyance, and become extortionate robbers, instead of "the protectors of the poor." It seems to be inherent in the Oriental mind to abuse authority. I do not scruple to say that all the vast army of policemen, court peons, writers, clerks, messengers, and underlings of all sorts, about the courts of justice, in the service of Government officers, or in any way attached to the retinue of a Government official, one and all are undeniably shamelessly venal and corrupt. They accept a bribe much more quickly than an attorney a fee, or a hungry dog a shin of beef. If a policeman only enters a village he expects a feast from the head man, and will ask a present with unblushing effrontery as a perquisite of his office. If a theft is reported, the inspector of the nearest police-station, or *thanna* as it is called, sends one of his myrmidons, or, if the chance of bribes be good, he may attend himself. On arrival, ambling on his broken-kneed, wall-eyed pony, he seats himself in the verandah of the chief man of the village, who forthwith, with much inward trepidation, makes his appearance. The policeman assumes the air of a haughty conqueror receiving homage from a conquered foe. He assures the trembling wretch that, "acting on information received," he must search his dwelling for the missing goods, and that his women's apartments will have to be ransacked, and so annoys, goads, and insults the unfortunate man, that he is too glad to purchase immunity from further insolence by making the policeman a small present, perhaps a "kid from the goats," or something else. The guardian of the peace is then regaled with the best food in the house, after which he becomes "wreathed with smiles." If he sees a chance of a farther bribe, he takes his departure saying he will have to report to the *thanna*. He repeats his procedure with each of the other respectable inhabitants, and goes

deal richer than he came, to share the spoil with the *thannadar* or inspector.

Another man may then be sent, and the same course is followed, until all the force in the station have had their share. The ryot is afraid to resist. The police have tremendous powers for annoying and doing him harm. A crowd of subservient scoundrels always hangs round the station, dependents, relations, or accomplices. These harry the poor man who is unwise enough to resist the extortionate demands of the police. They take his cattle to the pound, foment strife between him and his neighbours, get up frivolous and false charges against him, harass him in a thousand ways, and if all else fails, get him summoned as a witness in some case. You might think a witness a person to be treated with respect, to be attended to, to have every facility offered him for giving his evidence at the least cost of time and trouble possible consistent with the demands of justice and the vindication of law and authority.

Not so in India with the witness in a police case, when the force dislike him. If he has not previously satisfied their leech-like rapacity, he is tormented, tortured, bullied, and kicked "from pillar to post" till his life becomes a burden to him. He has to leave all his avocations, perhaps at the time when his affairs require his constant supervision. He has to trudge many a weary mile to attend the Court. The police get hold of him, and keep him often in real durance. He gets no opportunity for cooking or eating his food. His daily habits are upset and interfered with. In every little vexatious way (and they are masters of the art of petty [illegible]e) they so worry and goad him, that the very threat of [illegible]mmoned as a witness in a police case, is often enough [illegible] the horrified well-to-do native give a handsome [illegible]e allowed to sit quietly at home.

[illegible]xaggeration. It is the every-day practice of [illegible]y exercise a real despotism. They have set

up a reign of terror. The nature of the ryot is such, that he will submit to a great deal to avoid having to leave his home and his work. The police take full advantage of this feeling, and being perfectly unscrupulous, insatiably rapacious, and leagued together in villany, they make a golden harvest out of every case put into their hands. They have made the name of justice stink in the nostrils of the respectable and well-to-do middle classes of India.

The District Superintendents are men of energy and probity, but after all they are only mortal. What with accounts, inspections, reports, forms, and innumerable writings, they cannot exercise a constant vigilance and personal supervision over every part of their district. A district may comprise many hundred villages, thousands of inhabitants, and leagues of intricate and densely peopled country. The mere physical exertion of riding over his district in about a week would be too much for any man. The subordinate police are all interested in keeping up the present system of extortion, and the inspectors and sub-inspectors, who wink at malpractices, come in for their share of the spoil. There is little combination among the peasantry. Each selfishly tries to save his own skin, and they know that if any one individual were to complain, or to dare to resist, he would have to bear the brunt of the battle alone. None of his neighbours would stir a finger to back him; he is too timid and too much in awe of the official European, and constitutionally too averse to resistance, to do aught but suffer in silence. No doubt he feels his wrongs most keenly, and a sullen feeling of hate and wrong is being garnered up, which may produce results disastrous for the peace and well-being of our empire in the East.

As a case in point, I may mention one instance out of many which came under my own observation. I had a *moonshee*, or accountant, in one of my outworks in Purneah. Formerly, when the police had come through the factory, he

had been in the habit of giving them a present and some food. Under my strict orders, however, that no policemen were to be allowed near the place unless they came on business, he had discontinued paying his black-mail. This was too glaring an infringement of what they considered their vested rights to be passed over in silence. Example might spread. My man must be made an example of. I had a case in the Court of the Deputy Magistrate some twenty miles or so from the factory. The moonshee had been named as a witness to prove the writing of some papers filed in the suit. They got a citation for him to appear, a mere summons for his attendance as a witness. Armed with this, they appeared at the factory two or three days before the date fixed on for hearing the cause. I had just ridden in from Purneah, tired, hot, and dusty, and was sitting in the shade of the verandah with young D., my assistant. One policeman first came up, presented the summons, which I took, and he then stated that it was a *warrant* for the production of my moonshee, and that he must take him away at once. I told the man it was merely a summons, requiring the attendance of the moonshee on a certain date to give evidence in the case. He was very insolent in his manner. It is customary when a Hindoo of inferior rank appears before you, that he removes his shoes, and stands before you in a respectful attitude. This man's headdress was all disarranged, which in itself is a sign of disrespect. He spoke loudly and insolently; kept his shoes on; and sat down squatting on the grass before me. My assistant was very indignant, and wanted to speak to the man; but rightly judging that the object was to enrage me, and trap me into committing some overt act, that would be afterwards construed against me, I kept my temper, spoke very firmly but temperately, told him my moonshee was doing some work of great importance, that I could not spare his services then, but that I would myself see that the summons was attended to. The policeman became more boisterous and insolent. I

offered to give him a letter to the magistrate, acknowledging the receipt of the summons, and I asked him his own name, which he refused to give. I asked him if he could read, and he said he could not. I then asked him if he could not read, how could he know what was in the paper which he had brought, and how he knew my moonshee was the party meant. He said a chowkeydar had told him so. I asked where was the chowkeydar, and seeing from my coolness and determination that the game was up, he shouted out, and from round the corner of the huts came another policeman and two village chowkeydars from a distance. They had evidently been hiding, observing all that passed, and meaning to act as witnesses against me, if I had been led by the first scoundrel's behaviour to lose my temper. The second man was not such a brute as the first, and when I proceeded to ask their names and all about them, and told them I meant to report them to their superintendent, they became somewhat frightened, and tried to make excuses.

I told them to be off the premises at once, offering to take the summons, and give a receipt for it, but they now saw that they had made a mistake in trying to bully me, and made off at once. Mark the sequel. The day before the case was fixed on for hearing, I sent off the moonshee, who was a witness of my own, and his evidence was necessary to my proving my case. I supplied him with travelling expenses, and he started. On his way to the Court he had to pass the *thanna*, or police-station. The police were on the watch. He was seized as he passed. He was confined all that night and all the following day. For want of his evidence I lost my case, and having thus achieved one part of their object to pay me off, they let my moonshee go, after insult and abuse, and with threats of future vengeance should he ever dare to thwart or oppose them. This was pretty "hot" you think, but it was not all. Fearing my complaint to the superintendent or to the authorities might get them into trouble,

they laid a false charge against me, that I had obstructed them in the discharge of their duty, that I had showered abuse on them, used threatening language, and insulted the majesty of the law by tearing up and spitting upon the respected summons of Her Majesty. On this complaint I was accordingly summoned into Purneah. The charge was a tissue of the most barefaced lies, but I had to ride fifty-four miles in the burning sun, ford several rivers, and undergo much fatigue and discomfort. My work was of course seriously interfered with. I had to take in my assistant as witness, and one or two of the servants who had been present. I was put to immense trouble, and no little expense, to say nothing of the indignation which I naturally felt, and all because I had set my face against a well-known evil, and was determined not to submit to impudent extortion. Of course the case broke down. They contradicted themselves in almost every particular. The second constable indeed admitted that I had offered them a letter to the magistrate, and had not moved out of the verandah during the colloquy. I was honourably acquitted, and had the satisfaction of seeing the lying rascals put into the dock by the indignant magistrate and prosecuted summarily for getting up a false charge and giving false evidence. It was a lesson to the police in those parts, and they did not dare to trouble me much afterwards; but it is only one instance out of hundreds I could give, and which every planter has witnessed, of the barefaced audacity, the shameless extortion, the unblushing lawlessness of the rural police of India.

It is a gigantic evil, but surely not irremediable. By adding more European officers to the force; by educating the people and making them more intelligent, independent, and self-reliant, much may be done to abate the evil, but at present it is admittedly a foul ulcer on the administration of justice under our rule. The menial who serves a summons, gets a decree of Court to execute, or is entrusted with any

order of an official nature, expects to be bribed to do his duty. If he does not get his fee, he will throw such impediments in the way, raise such obstacles, and fashion such delays, that he completely foils every effort to procure justice through a legal channel. No wonder a native hates our English Courts. Our English officials, let it be plainly understood, are above suspicion. It needs not my poor testimony to uphold their character for high honour, loyal integrity, and zealous eagerness to "do justly and to walk uprightly." They are unwearied in their efforts to get at truth, and govern wisely; but our system of law is totally unsuited for Orientals. It is made a medium for chicanery and trickery of the most atrocious form. Most of the native underlings are utterly venal and corrupt. Increased pay does not mean decrease of knavery. Cheating, and lying and taking bribes, and abuse of authority are ingrained into their very souls; and all the cut and dry formulas of namby-pamby philanthropists, the inane maunderings of stay-at-home sentimentalists, the wise saws of self-opinionated theorists, who know nothing of the Hindoo as he really shows himself to us in daily and hourly contact with him, will ever persuade me that native, as opposed to English, rule would be productive of aught but burning oppression and shameless venality, or would end in anything but anarchy and chaos.

It sounds very well in print, and increases the circulation of a paper or two among the Baboos, to cry out that our task is to elevate the oppressed and ignorant millions of the East, to educate them into self-government, to make them judges, officers, lawgivers, governors over all the land. To vacate our place and power, and let the Baboo and the Burmeah, to whom we have given the glories of Western civilization, rule in our place, and guide the fortunes of these toiling millions who owe protection and peace to our fostering rule. It is a noble sentiment to resign wealth, honour, glory, and power;

to give up a settled government; to alter a policy that has welded the conflicting elements of Hindostan into one stable whole; to throw up our title of conqueror, and disintegrate a mighty empire. For what? A sprinkling of thinly-veneered, half-educated natives want a share of the loaves and fishes in political scrambling, and a few inane people of the "man and brother" type cry out at home to let them have their way.

No. Give the Hindoo education, equal laws, protection to life and property; develop the resources of the country; foster all the virtues you can find in the native mind; but till you can give him the energy, the integrity, the singleness of purpose, the manly, honourable straightforwardness of the Anglo-Saxon; his scorn of meanness, trickery, and fraud; his loyal single-heartedness to do right; his contempt for oppression of the weak; his self-dependence; his probity. But why go on? When you make Hindoos honest, truthful, God-fearing Englishmen, you can let them govern themselves; but as soon "may the leopard change his spots" as the Hindoo his character. He is wholly unfit for self-government; utterly opposed to honest, truthful, staple government at all. Time brings strange changes, but the wisdom which has governed the country hitherto will surely be able to meet the new demand that may be made upon it in the immediate present or in the far distant future.

CHAPTER XV.

Jungle wild fruits—Curious method of catching quail—Quail nets—Quail caught in a blacksmith's shop—Native wrestling—The trainer—How they train for a match—Rules of wrestling—Grips—A wrestling match—Incidents of the struggle—Description of a match between a Brahmin and a blacksmith—Sparring for the grip—The blacksmith has it—The struggle—The Brahmin getting the worst of it—Two to one on the little 'un!—The Brahmin plays the waiting game, turns the tables *and* the blacksmith—Remarks on wrestling.

A PECULIARITY in the sombre sal jungles is the scarcity of wild fruit. At home the woods are filled with berries and fruit-bearing bushes. Who among my readers has not a lively recollection of bramble hunting, nutting, or merry expeditions for blueberries, wild strawberries, raspberries, and other wild fruits? You might walk many a mile through the sal jungles without meeting fruit of any kind, save the dry and tasteless wild fig or the sickly mhowa.

There are indeed very few jungle fruits that I have ever come across. There is one acid sort of plum called the *Omra*, which makes a good preserve, but is not very nice to eat raw. The *Gorkah* is a small red berry, very sweet and pleasant, slightly acid, not unlike a red currant in fact, and with two small pips or stones. The Nepaulese call it *Bunchooree*. It grows on a small stunted-looking bush with few branches, and a pointed leaf, in form resembling the acacia leaf, but not so large.

The *Glaphur* is a brown, round fruit; the skin rather crisp and hard, and of a dull earthy colour, not unlike that of a common boiled potato. The inside is a stringy, spongy-

looking mass, with small seeds embedded in a gummy viscid substance. The taste is exactly like an almond, and it forms a pleasant mouthful if one is thirsty.

Travelling one day along one of the glades I have mentioned as dividing the strips of jungle, I was surprised to see a man before me in a field of long stubble, with a cloth spread over his head, and two sticks projecting in front at an obtuse angle to his body, forming horn-like projections, on which the ends of his cloth, twisted spirally, were tied. I thought from his curious antics and movements that he must be mad, but I soon discovered that there was method in his madness. He was catching quail. The quail are often very numerous in the stubble fields, and the natives adopt very ingenious devices for their capture. This was one I was now witnessing. Covering themselves with their cloth as I have described, the projecting ends of the two sticks representing the horns, they simulate all the movements of a cow or bull. They pretend to paw up the earth, toss their make-believe horns, turn round and pretend to scratch themselves, and in fact identify themselves with the animal they are representing; and it is irresistibly comic to watch a solitary performer go through this *al fresco* comedy. I have laughed often at some cunning old herdsman or shekarry. When they see you watching them, they will redouble their efforts, and try to represent an old bull, going through all his pranks and practices, and throw you into convulsions of laughter.

Round two sides of the field, they have previously put fine nets, and at the apex they have a large cage with a decoy quail inside, or perhaps a pair. The quail is a running bird, disinclined for flight except at night; in the day-time they prefer running to using their wings. The idiotic-looking old cow, as we will call the hunter, has all his wits about him. He proceeds very slowly and warily, his keen eye detects the coveys of quail, which way they are running; his ruse

generally succeeds wonderfully. He is no more like a cow than that respectable animal is like a cucumber; but he paws, and tosses, and moves about, pretends to eat, to nibble here, and switch his tail there, and so manœuvres as to keep the running quail away from the unprotected edges of the field. When they get to the verge protected by the net, they begin to take alarm; they are probably not very certain about the peculiar-looking "old cow" behind them, and running along the net, they see the decoy quails evidently feeding in great security and freedom. The V-shaped mouth of the large basket cage looks invitingly open. The puzzling nets are barring the way, and the "old cow" is gradually closing up behind. As the hunter moves along, I should have told you, he rubs two pieces of dry hard sticks gently up and down his thigh with one hand, producing a peculiar crepitation, a crackling sound, not sufficient to startle the birds into flight, but alarming them enough to make them get out of the way of the "old cow." One bolder than the others, possibly the most timid of the covey, irritated by the queer crackling sound, now enters the basket, the others follow like a flock of sheep; and once in, the puzzling shape of the entrance prevents their exit. Not unfrequently the hunter bags twenty or even thirty brace of quail in one field by this ridiculous-looking but ingenious method.

The small quail net is also sometimes used for the capture of hares. The natives stretch the net in the jungle, much as they do the large nets for deer described in a former chapter; forming a line, they then beat up the hares, of which there are no stint. My friend Pat once made a novel haul. His *loharkhanna* or blacksmith's shop was close to a patch of jungle, and Pat often noticed numbers of quail running through the loose chinks and crevices of the walls, in the morning when any one went into the place for the first time; this was at a factory called Rajpore. Pat came to the conclusion, that as the blacksmith's fires smouldered some time

after work was discontinued at night, and as the atmosphere of the hut was warmer and more genial than the cold, foggy, outside air, for it was in the cold season, the quail probably took up their quarters in the hut for the night, on account of the warmth and shelter. One night, therefore, he got some of his servants, and with great caution and as much silence as possible, they let down a quantity of nets all round the loharkhanna, and in the morning they captured about twenty quails.

The quail is very pugnacious, and as they are easily trained to fight, they are very common pets with the natives, who train and keep them to pit them against each other, and bet what they can afford on the result. A quail fight, a battle between two trained rams, a cock fight, even an encounter between trained tamed buffaloes, are very common spectacles in the villages; but the most popular sport is a good wrestling match.

The dwellers in the Presidency towns, and indeed in most of the large stations, seldom see an exhibition of this kind; but away in the remote interior, near the frontier, it is a very popular pastime, and wrestling is a favourite with all classes. Such manly sport is rather opposed to the commonly received idea at home of the mild Hindoo. In nearly every village of Behar, however, and all along the borders of Nepaul, there is, as a rule, a bit of land attached to the residence of some head man, or the common property of the commune, set apart for the practice of athletic sports, chief of which is the favourite *khoosthee* or wrestling. There is generally some wary old veteran, who has won his spurs, or laurels, or belt, or whatever you choose to call it, in many a hard fought and well contested tussle for the championship of his little world; he is "up to every dodge," and knows every feint and guard, every wile and tactic of the wrestling ground. It is generally situated in some shady grove, secluded and cool; here of an evening, when the labours of

the day are over, the most stalwart sons of the hamlet meet, to test each other's skill and endurance in a friendly tussle. The old man puts them through the preliminary practice, shows them every trick at his command, and attends strictly to their training and various trials. The arena is dug knee deep, and forms a soft, good holding ground. I have often looked on at this evening practice, and it would astonish a stranger, who cannot understand strength, endurance, and activity being attributed to a "mere nigger," to see the severe training these young lads impose upon themselves. They leap into the air, and suddenly assume a sitting position, then leap up again and squat down with a force that would seem to jerk every bone in their bodies out of its place; this gets up the muscles of the thighs. Some lie down at full length, only touching the ground with the extreme tips of their toes, their arms doubled up under them, and sustaining the full weight of the body on the extended palms of the hands. They then sway themselves backwards and forwards to their full length, never shifting hand or toe, till they are bathed in perspiration; they keep up a uniform steady backward and forward movement, so as to develop the muscles of the arms, chest, and back. They practise leaping, running, and lifting weights. Some, standing at their full height, brace up the muscles of the shoulder and upper arm, and then leaping up, allow themselves to fall to earth on the tensely strung muscles of the shoulder. This severe exercise gets the muscles into perfect form, and few, very few indeed of our untrained youths could cope in a dead lock or fierce struggle with a good village Hindoo or Mussulman in active training, and having any knowledge of the tricks of the wrestling school. No hitting is allowed. The Hindoo system of wrestling is the perfection of science and skill; mere dead weight of course will always tell in a close grip, but the catches, the holds, the twists and dodges that are practised, allow for the fullest development of cultivated

skill, as against mere brute force. The system is purely a scientific one. The fundamental rule is "catch where you can," only you must not clutch the hair or strike with the fists.

The loins are tightly girt with a long waist-belt or *kummerbund* of cloth, which, passed repeatedly between the limbs and round the loins, sufficiently braces up and protects that part of the body. In some matches you are not allowed to clutch this waist-cloth or belt, in some villages it is allowed; the custom varies in various places, but what is a fair grip, and what is not, is always made known before the competitors engage. A twist, or grip, or dodge, is known as a *paench*. This literally means a screw or twist, but in wrestling phraseology means any grip by which you can get such an advantage over your opponent as to defeat him. For every paench there is a counter paench. A throw is considered satisfactory when BOTH shoulders of your opponent touch the ground simultaneously. The old *khalifa* or trainer takes a great interest in the progress of his *chailas* or pupils. *Chaila* really means disciple or follower. Every khalifa has his favourite paenches or grips, which have stood him in good stead in his old battling days; he teaches these paenches to his pupils, so that when you get young fellows from different villages to meet, you see a really fine exhibition of wrestling skill. There is little tripping, as amongst our wrestlers at home; a dead-lock is uncommon. The rival wrestlers generally bound into the ring, slapping their thighs and arms with a loud resounding slap. They lift their legs high up from the ground with every step, and scheme and manœuvre sometimes for a long while to get the best corner; they try to get the sun into their adversaries' eyes; they scan the appearance and every movement of their opponent. The old wary fellows take it very coolly, and if they can't get the desired side of the ground, they keep hopping about like a solemn old ostrich, till the impetuosity or impatience

of their foe leads him to attack. They remind you for all the world of a pair of game cocks, their bodies are bent, their heads almost touching. There is a deal of light play with the hands, each trying to get the other by the wrist or elbow, or at the back of the head round the neck. If one gets the other by a finger even, it is a great advantage, as he would whip nimbly round, and threaten to break the impounded finger; this would be considered quite fair. One will often suddenly drop on his knees and try to reach the ankles of his adversary. I have seen a slippery customer stoop suddenly down, grasp up a handful of dust, and throw it into the eyes of his opponent. It was done with the quickness of thought, but it was detected, and on an appeal by the sufferer, the knave was well thrashed by the onlookers.

There are many professionals who follow no other calling. Wrestlers are kept by Rajahs and wealthy men who get up matches. Frequently one village will challenge another, like our village cricket clubs. The villagers often get up small subscriptions, and purchase a silver armlet or bracelet, the prize of him who shall hold his own against all comers. The "Champion's Belt" scarcely calls forth greater competition, keener rivalry, or better sport. It is at once the most manly and most scientific sport in which the native indulges. A disputed fall sometimes terminates in a general free fight, when the backers of the respective men lay on the stick to each other with mutual hate and hearty lustiness.

It is not by any means always the strongest who wins. The man who knows the most paenches, who is agile, active, cool, and careful, will not unfrequently overthrow an antagonist twice his weight and strength. All the wrestlers in the country-side know each other's qualifications pretty accurately, and at a general match got up by a Zemindar or planter, or by public subscription, it is generally safe to let them handicap the men who are ready to compete for the

prizes. We used generally to put down a few of the oldest professors, and let them pit couples against each other; the sport to the onlookers was most exciting. Between the men themselves, as a rule, the utmost good-humour reigns, they strive hard to win, but they accept a defeat with smiling resignation. It is only between rival village champions, different caste men, or worse still, men of differing religions, such as a Hindoo and a Mahommedan, that there is any danger of a fight. A disturbance is a rare exception, but I have seen a few wrestling matches end in a regular general scrimmage, with broken heads and even fractured limbs. With good management, however, and an efficient body of men to guard against a breach of the peace, this need never occur.

It rarely takes much trouble to get up a match. If you tell your head man that you would like to see one, say on a Saturday afternoon, they pass the word to the different villages, and at the appointed time, all the finest young fellows and most of the male population, led by their head man, with the old trainer in attendance, are at the appointed place. The competitors are admitted within the enclosure, and round it the rows of spectators, packed twenty deep, squat on the ground, and watch the proceeding with deep interest.

While the *Punchayiet*, a picked council, are taking down the names of intending competitors, finding out about their form and performances, and assigning to each his antagonist, the young men throw themselves with shouts and laughter into the ring, and go through all the evolutions and postures of the training ground. They bound about, try all sorts of antics and contortions, display wonderful agility and activity; it is a pretty sight to see, and one can't help admiring their vigorous frames and graceful proportions. They are handsome, well made, supple, wiry fellows, although they be NIGGERS, and Hodge and Giles at home would not have a

chance with them in a fair wrestling bout, conducted according to their own laws and customs.

The entries are now all made, places and pairs are arranged, and to the ear-splitting thunder of two or three tom-toms, two pair of strapping youngsters step into the ring; they carefully scan each other, advance, shake hands, or salaam, leisurely tie up their black hair, slap their muscles, rub a little earth over their shoulders and arms, so that their adversary may have a fair grip, then step by step slowly and gradually they near each other. A few quick passages are now interchanged; the lithe supple fingers twist and intertwine, grips are formed on arm and neck. The postures change each moment, and are a study for an anatomist or sculptor. As they warm to their work they get more reckless; they are only the raw material, the untrained lads. There is a quick scuffle, heaving, swaying, rocking, and struggling, and the two victors, leaping into the air, and slapping their chests, bound back into the gratified circle of their comrades, while the two discomfited athletes, forcing a rueful smile, retire and "take a back seat." Two couple of more experienced hands now face each other. There is pretty play this time, as the varying changes of the contest bring forth ever varying displays of skill and science. The crowd shout as an advantage is gained, or cry out "Hi, hi" in a doubtful manner, as their favourite seems to be getting the worst of it. The result however is much the same; after a longer or shorter time, two get fairly thrown and retire. If there is any dispute, it is at once referred to the judges, who sit grimly watching the struggle, and comparing the paenches displayed with those they themselves have practised in many a well-won fight. On a reference being made both combatants retain their exact hold and position, only cease straining. As soon as the matter is settled, they go at it again till victory determines in favour of the lucky man. In no similar contest in England, I am convinced, would there be

so much fairness, quietness, and order. The only stimulants in the crowd are betel nut and tobacco. All is orderly and calm, and at any moment a word from the sahib will quell any rising turbulence. It is now time for a still more scientific exhibition.

Pat has a man, a tall, wiry, handsome Brahmin, who has never yet been beaten. Young K. has long been jealous of his uniform success, and on several occasions has brought an antagonist to battle with Pat's champion. To-day he has got a sturdy young blacksmith, whom rumour hath much vaunted, and although he is not so tall as Pat's wrestler, his square, deep chest and stalwart limbs give promise of great strength and endurance.

As the two men strip and bound into the ring, there is the usual hush of anticipation. Keen eyes scan the appearance of the antagonists. They are both models of manly beauty. The blacksmith, though more awkward in his motions, has a cool, determined look about him. The Brahmin, conscious of his reputation, walks quickly up, with a smile of rather ostentatious condescension on his finely cut features, and offers his hand to the blacksmith. The little man is evidently suspicious. He thinks this may be a deeply laid trap to get a grip upon him. Nor does he like the bland patronising manner of "Roopnarain," so he surlily draws back, at which there is a roar of laughter from the crowd, in which we cannot help joining.

K. now comes forward, and pats his "fancy man" on the back. The two wrestlers thereupon shake hands, and then in the usual manner both warily move backwards and forwards, till, amid cries from the onlookers, the blacksmith makes a sudden dash at the practised old player, and in a moment has him round the waist. He evidently depended on his superior strength. For a moment he fairly lifted Roopnarain clean off his legs, swayed him to and fro, and with a mighty strain tried to throw him to the ground.

Bending to the strain, Roopnarain allowed himself to yield till his feet touched the ground, then, crouching like a panther, he bounded forward, and, getting his leg behind that of the blacksmith, by a deft side twist he nearly threw him over. The little fellow, however, steadied himself on the ground with one hand, recovered his footing, and again had the Brahmin firmly locked in his tenacious hold. Roopnarain did not like the grip. These were not the tactics he was accustomed to. While the other tugged and strained, he, quietly yielding his lithe lissom frame to every effort, tried hard with obstinate endeavour to untwist the hands that held him firmly locked. It was beautiful play to see the mute hands of both the wrestlers, feeling, tearing, twisting at each other; but the grasp was too firm, and, taking advantage of a momentary movement, Roopnarain got his elbow under the other's chin, then, leaning forward, he pressed his opponent's head backward, and the strain began to tell. He fought fiercely, he struggled hard, but the determined elbow was not to be baulked, and to save himself from an overthrow the blacksmith was forced to relax his hold, and sprang nimbly back beyond reach, to mature another attack. Roopnarain quietly walked round, rubbed his shoulders with earth, and with the same mocking smile, stood leaning forward, his hands on his knees, waiting for a fresh onset.

This time the young fellow was more cautious. He found he had no novice to deal with, and the Brahmin was not at all anxious to precipitate matters. By a splendid feint, after some pretty sparring for a grip, the youngster again succeeded in getting a hold on the Brahmin, and, wheeling round quick as lightning, got behind Roopnarain, and with a dexterous trip threw the tall man heavily on his face. He then tried to get him by the ankle, and bending his leg up backwards, he would have got a purchase for turning him on his back. The old man was, however, "up to this move." He lay extended flat on his chest, his legs wide apart. As often

as the little one bent down to grasp his ankle, he would put out a hand stealthily and silently as a snake, and endeavour to get the little man's leg in his grasp. This necessitated a change of position, and round and round they spun, each trying to get hold of the other by the leg or foot. The blacksmith got his knee on the neck of the Brahmin, and by sheer strength tried several times with a mighty heave to turn his opponent. It was no use, however; it is next to impossible to throw a man when he is lying flat out as the Brahmin now was. It is difficult enough to turn the dead weight of a man in that position, and when he is straining every nerve to resist the accomplishment of your object it becomes altogether impracticable. The excitement in the crowd was intense. The very drummer—I ought to call him a tom-tomer—had ceased to beat his tom-tom. Pat's lips were firmly pressed together, and K. was trembling with suppressed excitement. The heaving chests and profuse perspiration bedewing the bodies of both combatants, told how severe had been their exertions. The blacksmith seemed gathering himself up for a mighty effort, when, quick as light, the Brahmin drew his limbs together, and was seen to arch his back, and, with a sudden backward movement, seemed to glide from under his dashing assailant, and, quicker than it takes me to write it, the positions were reversed.

The Brahmin was now above, and the blacksmith, taking in the altered aspect of affairs at a glance, threw himself flat on the ground, and tried the same tactics as his opponent. The different play of the two men now came strongly into relief. Instead of exhausting himself with useless efforts, Roopnarain, while keeping a wary eye on every movement of his prostrate foe, contented himself, while he took breath, with coolly and yet determinedly making his grip secure. Putting out one leg then within reach of his opponent's hand as a lure, he saw the blacksmith stretch forth to grasp the tempting hold.

Quicker than the dart of the python, the fierce onset of the kingly tiger, the sudden flash of the forked and quivering lightning, was the grasp made at the outstretched arm by the practised Brahmin. His tenacious fingers closed tightly round the other's wrist. One sudden wrench, and he had the blacksmith's arm bent back and powerless, held down on the little fellow's own shoulders. Pat smiled a derisive smile, K. uttered what was not a benison, while the Brahmins in the crowd, and all Pat's men, raised a truly Hindoo howl of joy. The position of the men was now this. The stout little man was flat on his face, one of his arms bent helplessly round on his own back. Roopnarain, calm and cool as ever, was astride the prostrate blacksmith, placidly surveying the crowd. The little man writhed and twisted and struggled, he tried with his legs to entwine himself with those of the Brahmin. He tried to spin round; the Brahmin was watching with the eye of a hawk for a grip of the other arm, but it was closely drawn in, and firmly pressed in safety under the heaving chest of the blacksmith. The muscles were of steel; it could not be dislodged: that was seen at a glance. The calmness and placidity of the old athlete was surprising, it was wonderful. Still bending the imprisoned arm further back, he put his knee on the neck of the poor little hero, game as a pebble through it all, and by a strong steady strain tried to bend him over, till we thought either the poor fellow's neck must break, or his arm be torn from its socket.

He endured all without a murmur. Not a chance did he throw away. Once or twice he made a splendid effort; once he tried to catch the Brahmin again by the leg. Roopnarain pounced down, but the arm was as quickly within its shield. It was now but a question of time and endurance. Every dodge that he was master of did the Brahmin bring into play. They were both in perfect training, muscles as hard as steel, every nerve and sinew strained to the utmost

tension. Roopnarain actually tried tickling his man, but he would not give him a chance. At length he got his hand in the bent elbow of the free arm, and slowly and laboriously forced it out. There were tremendous spurts and struggles, but patient determination was not to be baulked. Slowly the arm came up over the back, the struggle was tremendous, but at length both the poor fellow's arms were tightly pinioned behind his back. He was powerless now. The Brahmin drew the two arms backwards, towards the head of the poor little fellow, and he was bound to come over or have both his arms broken. With a hoarse cry of sobbing pain and shame, the brave little man came over, both shoulders on the mould, and the scientific old veteran was again the victor.

This is but a very faint description of a true wrestling bout among the robust dwellers in these remote villages. It may seem cruel, but it is to my mind the perfection of muscular strength and skill, combined with keen subtle, intellectual acuteness. It brings every faculty of mind and body into action, it begets a healthy honest love of fair play, and an admiration of endurance and pluck, two qualities of which Englishmen certainly can boast. Strength without skill and training will not avail. It is a fine manly sport, and one which should be encouraged by all who wish well to our dusky fellow subjects in the far-off plains and valleys of Hindostan.

CHAPTER XVI.

Indigo seed growing—Seed buying and buyers—Tricks of sellers—Tests for good seed—The threshing-floor—Seed cleaning and packing—Staff of servants—Despatching the bags by boat—The "Pooneah" or rent-day—Purneah planters—their hospitality—The rent-day a great festival—Preparation—Collection of rents—Feast to retainers—The reception in the evening—Tribute—Old customs—Improvisatores and bards—Nautches—Dancing and music—The dance of the Dangurs—Jugglers and itinerary showmen—"Bara Roopes," or actors and mimics—Their different styles of acting.

BESIDES indigo planting proper, there is another large branch of industry in North Bhaugulpore and along the Nepaul frontier there, and in Purneah, namely, the growing of indigo seed for the Bengal planters. The system of advances and the mode of cultivation is much the same as that followed in indigo planting proper. The seed is sown in June or July, is weeded and tended all through the rains, and cut in December. The planters advance about four rupees a beegah to the ryot, who cuts his seed plant, and brings it into the factory threshing-ground, where it is beaten out, cleaned, weighed, and packed in bags. When the seed has been threshed out and cleaned, it is weighed, and the ryot or cultivator gets four rupees for every maund—a maund being eighty pounds avoirdupois. The previous advance is deducted. The rent or loan account is adjusted, and the balance made over in cash.

Others grow the seed on their own account, without taking advances, and bring it to the factory for sale. If prices are ruling high, they may get much more than four rupees per maund for it, and they adopt all kinds of ingenious devices

to adulterate the seed, and increase its weight. They mix dust with it, seeds of weeds, even grains of wheat, and mustard, pea, and other seeds. In buying seed, therefore, one has to be very careful, to reject all that looks bad, or that may have been adulterated. They will even get old useless seed, the refuse stock of former years, and, mixing this with leaves of the neem tree and some turmeric powder, give it a gloss that makes it look like fresh seed.

When you suspect that the seed has been tampered with in this manner, you wet some of it, and rub it on a piece of fresh clean linen, so as to bring off the dye. Where the attempt has been flagrant, you are sometimes tempted to take the law into your own hands, and administer a little of the castigation which the cheating rascal so richly deserves. In other cases it is necessary to submit the seed to a microscopic examination. If any old, worn seeds are detected, you reject the sample unhesitatingly. Even when the seed appears quite good, you subject it to yet another test. Take one or two hundred seeds, and, putting them on a damp piece of the pith of a plantain tree, mixed with a little earth, set them in a warm place, and in two days you will be able to tell what percentage has germinated, and what is incapable of germination. If the percentage is good, the seed may be considered as fairly up to the sample, and it is purchased. There are native seed buyers, who try to get as much into their hands as they can and rig the market. There are also European buyers, and there is a keen rivalry in all the bazaars.

The threshing-floor and seed-cleaning ground presents a busy sight when several thousand maunds of seed are being got ready for despatch by boats. The dirty seed, full of dust and other impurities, is heaped up in one corner. The floor is in the shape of a large square, nicely paved with cement, as hard and clean as marble. Crowds of nearly nude coolies hurry to and fro with scoops of seed resting on their

shoulders. When they get in line, at right angles to the direction in which the wind is blowing, they move slowly along, letting the seed descend on the heap below, while the wind winnows it, and carries the dust in dense clouds to leeward. This is repeated over and over again, till the seed is as clean as it can be made. It is put through bamboo sieves, so formed that any seed larger than indigo cannot pass through. What remains in the sieve is put aside, and afterwards cleaned, sorted, and sold as food, or if useless, thrown away or given to the fowls. The men and boys dart backwards and forwards, there is a steady drip, drip, of seed from the scoops, dense clouds of dust, and incessant noise and bustle. Peons or watchmen are stationed all around to see that none is wasted or stolen. Some are filling sacks full of the cleaned seed, and hauling them off to the weighman and his clerk. Two maunds are put in every sack, and when weighed the bags are hauled up close to the *godown* or store-room. Here are an army of men with sail-makers' needles and twine. They sew up the bags, which are then hauled away to be marked with the factory brand. Carts are coming and going, carrying bags to the boats, which are lying at the river bank taking in their cargo, and the returning carts bring back loads of wood from the banks of the river. In one corner, under a shed, sits the sahib chaffering with a party of *paikars* (seed merchants), who have brought seed for sale.

Of course he decries the seed, says it is bad, will not hear of the price wanted, and laughs to scorn all the fervent protestations that the seed was grown on their own ground, and has never passed through any hands but their own. If you are satisfied that the seed is good, you secretly name your price to your head man, who forthwith takes up the work of depreciation. You move off to some other department of the work. The head man and the merchants sit down, perhaps smoke a *hookah*, each trying to outwit the

other, but after a keen encounter of wits perhaps a bargain is made. A pretty fair price is arrived at, and away goes the purchased seed, to swell the heap at the other end of the yard. It has to be carefully weighed first, and the weighman gets a little from the vendor as his perquisite, which the factory takes from him at the market rate.

You have buyers of your own out in the *dehaat* (district), and the parcels they have bought come in hour by hour, with invoices detailing all particulars of quantity, quality, and price. The loads from the seed depots and outworks come rolling up in the afternoon, and have all to be weighed, checked, noted down, and examined. Every man's hand is against you. You cannot trust your own servants. For a paltry bribe they will try to pass a bad parcel of seed, and even when you have your European assistants to help you, it is hard work to avoid being overreached in some shape or other.

You have to keep up a large staff of writers, who make out invoices and accounts, and keep the books. Your correspondence alone is enough work for one man, and you have to tally bags, count coolies, see them paid their daily wage, attend to lawsuits that may be going on, and yet find time to superintend the operations of the farm, and keep an eye to your rents and revenues from the villages. It is a busy, an anxious time. You have a vast responsibility on your shoulders, and when one takes into consideration the climate you have to contend with, the home comforts and domestic joys you have to do without, the constant tension of mind and irritation of body from dust, heat, insects, lies, bribery, robbers, and villainy of every description, that meets you on all hands, it must be allowed that a planter at such a time has no easy life.

The time at which you despatch the seed is also the very time when you are preparing your land for spring sowings. This requires almost as much surveillance as the seed-buying

and despatching. You have not a moment you can call your own. If you had subordinates you could trust, who would be faithful and honest, you could safely leave part of the work to them, but from very sad experience I have found that trusting to a native is trusting to a very rotten stick. They are certainly not all bad, but there are just enough exceptions to prove the rule.

One peculiar custom prevailed in this border district of North Bhaugulpore, which I have not observed elsewhere. At the beginning of the financial year, when the accounts of the past season had all been made up and arranged, and the collection of the rents for the new year was beginning, the planters and Zemindars held what what was called the *Pooneah.* It is customary for all cultivators and tenants to pay a proportion of their rent in advance. The Pooneah might therefore be called "rent-day." A similar day is set apart for the same purpose in Tirhoot, called *tousee* or collections, but it is not attended by the same ceremonious observances and quaint customs, as attach to the Pooneah on the border land.

When every man's account has been made up and checked by the books, the Pooneah day is fixed on. Invitations are sent to all your neighbouring friends, who look forward to each other's annual Pooneah as a great gala day. In North Bhaugulpore and Purneah, nearly all the planters and English-speaking population belong to old families who have been born in the district, and have settled and lived there long before the days of quick communication with home. Their rule among their dependents is patriarchal. Every-one is known among the natives, who have seen him since his birth living amongst them, by some pet name. The old men of the villages remember his father and his father's father, the younger villagers have had him pointed out to them on their visits to the factory as "Willie Baba," "Freddy Baba," or whatever his boyish name may have been, with the

addition of "Baba," which is simply a pet name for a child. These planters know every village for miles and miles. They know most of the leading men in each village by name. The villagers know all about them, discuss their affairs with the utmost freedom, and not a single thing, ever so trivial, happens in the planter's home but it is known and commented on in all the villages that lie within the *ilaka* (jurisdiction) of the factory.

The hospitality of these planters is unbounded. They are most of them much liked by all the natives round. I came a "stranger amongst them," and in one sense, and not a flattering sense, they tried "to take me in," but only in one or two instances, which I shall not specify here. By nearly all I was welcomed, and kindly treated, and I formed some very lasting friendships among them. Old traditions of princely hospitality still linger among them. They were clannish in the best sense of the word. The kindness and attention given to aged or indigent relations was one of their best traits. I am afraid the race is fast dying out. Lavish expenditure and a too confiding faith in their native dependents has often brought the usual result. But many of my readers will associate with the name of Purneah or Bhaugulpore planter, recollections of hospitality and unostentatious kindness, and memories of glorious sport and warm-hearted friendships.

On the Pooneah day then, or the night before, many of these friends would meet. The day has long been known to all the villages round, and nothing could better show the patriarchal semi-feudal style in which they ruled over their villages than the customs in connection with this anniversary. Some days before it, requisitions have been made on all the villages in any way connected with the factory for various articles of diet. The herdsmen have to send a tribute of milk, curds, and *ghee* or clarified butter. Cultivators of root crops or fruit send in samples of their produce, in the shape of huge

bundles of plantains, immense jack-fruits, or baskets of sweet potatoes, yams and other vegetables. The *koomhar* or potter has to send in earthen pots and jars. The *mochee* or worker in leather brings with him a sample of his work in the shape of a pair of shoes. These are pounced on by your servants and *omlah*, the omlah being the head man in the office. It is a fine time for them. Wooden shoes, umbrellas, brass pots, fowls, goats, fruits, in fact all the productions of your country side are sent or brought in. It is the old feudal tribute of the middle ages back again. During the day the *cutcherry* or office is crowded with the more respectable villagers, paying in rents and settling accounts. The noise and bustle are great, but an immense quantity of work is got through.

The village putwarries and head men are all there with their voluminous accounts. Your rent-collector, called a *tehseeldar*, has been busy in the villages with the tenants and putwarries, collecting rent for the great Pooneah day. There is a constant chink of money, a busy hum, a scratching of innumerable pens. Under every tree, 'neath the shade of every hut, busy groups are squatted round some acute accountant. Totals are being totted up on all hands. From greasy recesses in the waistband a dirty bundle is slowly pulled forth, and the desired sum reluctantly counted out.

From early morn till dewy eve this work goes on, and you judge your Pooneah to have been a good or bad one by the amount you are able to collect. Peons, with their brass badges flashing in the sun, and their red puggrees showing off their bronzed faces and black whiskers, are despatched in all directions for defaulters. There is a constant going to and fro, a hurrying and bustling in the crowd, a hum as of a distant fair pervading the place, and by evening the total of the day's collections is added up, and while the sahib and his friends take their sherry and bitters, the omlah and

servants retire to wash and feast, and prepare for the night's festivities.

During the day, at the houses of the omlah, culinary preparations on a vast scale have been going on. The large supplies of grain, rice, flower, fruit, vegetables, &c., which were brought in as *salamee* or tribute, supplemented by additions from the sahib's own stores, have been made into savoury messes. Curries and cakes, boiled flesh and roast kid, are all ready, and the crowd, having divested themselves of their head-dress and outer garments, and cleaned their hands and feet by copious ablutions, sit down in a wide circle. The large leaves of the water-lily are now served out to each man, and perform the office of plates. Huge baskets of *chupatties*, a flat sort of "griddle-cake," are now brought round, and each man gets four or five doled out. The cooking and attendance is all done by Brahmins. No inferior caste would answer, as Rajpoots and other high castes will only eat food that has been cooked by a Brahmin or one of their own class. The Brahmin attendants now come round with great *dekchees* or cooking-pots, full of curried vegetables, boiled rice, and similar dishes. A ladleful is handed out to each man, who receives it on his leaf. The rice is served out by the hands of the attendants. The guests manipulate a huge ball of rice and curry mixed between the fingers of the right hand, pass this solemnly into their widely-gaping mouths, with the head thrown back to receive the mess, like an adjutant-bird swallowing a frog, and then they masticate with much apparent enjoyment. Sugar, treacle, curds, milk, oil, butter, preserves and chutnees are served out to the more wealthy and respectable. The amount they can consume is wonderful. Seeing the enormous supplies, you would think that even this great crowd could never get through them, but by the time repletion has set in, there is little or nothing left, and many of the inflated and distended old farmers could begin again and repeat "another of the

same" with ease. Each person has his own *lotah*, a brass drinking vessel, and when all have eaten they again wash their hands, rinse out their mouths, and don their gayest apparel.

The gentlemen in the bungalow now get word that the evening's festivities are about to commence. Lighting our cigars, we sally out to the *shamiana* which has been erected on the ridge, surrounding the deep tank which supplies the factory during the manufacturing season with water. The *shamiana* is a large canopy or wall-less tent. It is festooned with flowers and green plantain trees, and evergreens have been planted all round it. Flaring flambeaux, torches, Chinese lanterns, and oil lamps flicker and glare, and make the interior almost as bright as day. When we arrive we find our chairs drawn up in state, one raised seat in the centre being the place of honour, and reserved for the manager of the factory.

When we are seated, the *malee* or gardener advances with a wooden tray filled with sand, in which are stuck heads of all the finest flowers the garden can afford, placed in the most symmetrical patterns, and really a pretty tasteful piece of workmanship. Two or three old Brahmins, principal among whom is "Hureehar Jha," a wicked old scoundrel, now advance, bearing gay garlands of flowers, muttering a strange gibberish in Sanskrit, supposed to be a blessing, but which might be a curse for all we understood of it, and decking our wrists and necks with these strings of flowers. For this service they get a small gratuity. The factory omlah, headed by the dignified, portly *gomastha* or confidential adviser, dressed in snowy turbans and spotless white, now come forward. A large brass tray stands on the table in front of you. They each present a *salamee* or *nuzzur*, that is, a tribute or present, which you touch, and it is then deposited with a rattling jingle on the brass plate. The head men of villages, putwarries, and wealthy tenants, give two, three, and

sometimes even four rupees. Every tenant of respectability thinks it incumbent on him to give something. Every man as he comes up makes a low salaam, deposits his *salamee*, his name is written down, and he retires. The putwarries present two rupees each, shouting out their names, and the names of their villages. Afterwards a small assessment is levied on the villagers, of a "pice" or two "pice" each, about a half-penny of our money, and which recoups the putwarree for his outlay.

This has nothing to do with the legitimate revenue of the factory. It never appears in the books. It is quite a voluntary offering, and I have never seen it in any other district. In the meantime the *Rajbhats*, a wandering class of hereditary minstrels or bards, are singing your praises and those of your ancestors in ear-splitting strains. Some of them have really good voices, all possess the gift of improvisation, and are quick to seize on the salient points of the scene before them, and weave them into their song, sometimes in a very ingenious and humorous manner. They are often employed by rich natives, to while away a long night with one of their treasured rhythmical tales or songs. One or two are kept in the retinue of every Rajah or noble, and they possess a mine of legendary information, which would be invaluable to the collector of folk-lore and antiquarian literature.

At some of the Pooneahs the evening's gaiety winds up with a *nautch* or dance, by dancing girls or boys. I always thought this a most sleep-inspiring exhibition. It has been so often described that I need not trouble my readers with it. The women are gaily dressed in brocades and gauzy textures, and glitter with spangles and tawdry ornaments. The musical accompaniment of clanging zither, asthmatic fiddle, timber-toned drum, clanging cymbal, and harsh metallic triangle, is a sore affliction, and when the dusky prima donna throws back her head, extends her chest, gets up to her high

note, with her hand behind her ear, and her paun-stained mouth and teeth wide expanded like the jaws of a fangless wolf, while the demoniac instruments and performers redouble their din, the noise is something too dreadful to experience often. The native women sit mute and hushed, seeming to like it. I have heard it said that the Germans eat ants. Finlanders relish penny candles. The Nepaulese gourmandise on putrid fish. I am myself fond of mouldy cheese, and organ-grinders are an object of affection with some of our home community. I *know* that the general run of natives delight in a nautch. Tastes differ, but to me it is an inexplicable phenomenon.

Amid all this noise we sit till we are wearied. Paun-leaves and betel nut are handed round by the servants. There is a very sudorific odour from the crowd. All are comfortably seated on the ground. The torches flare, and send up volumes of smoke to the ornamented roof of the canopy. The lights are reflected in the deep glassy bosom of the silent tank. The combined sounds and odours get oppressive, and we are glad to get back to the bungalow, to consume our "peg" and our "weed" in the congenial company of our friends.

In some factories the night closes with a grand dance by all the inhabitants of the *dangur tola*. The men and women range themselves in two semicircles, standing opposite each other. The tallest of both lines at the one end, diminishing away at the other extremity to the children and little ones who can scarcely toddle. They have a wild, plaintive song, with swelling cadences and abrupt stops. They go through an extraordinary variety of evolutions, stamping with one foot and keeping perfect time. They sway their bodies, revolve, march, and countermarch, the men sometimes opening their ranks, and the women going through, and *vice versâ*. They turn round like the winding convolutions of a shell, increase their pace as the song waxes quick and shrill,

get excited, and finish off with a resounding stamp of the foot, and a guttural cry which seems to exhaust all the breath left in their bodies. The men then get some liquor, and the women a small money present. If the sahib is very liberal he gives them a pig on which to feast, and the *dangurs* go away very happy and contented. Their dance is not unlike the *corroborry* of the Australian aborigines. The two races are not unlike each other too in feature, although I cannot think that they are in any way connected.

Next morning there is a jackal hunt, or cricket, or pony races, or shooting matches, or sport of some kind, while the rent collection still goes on. In the afternoon we have grand wrestling matches amongst the natives for small prizes, and generally witness some fine exhibitions of athletic skill and endurance.

Some wandering juggler may have been attracted by the rumour of the gathering. A tight-rope dancer, a snake charmer, an itinerant showman with a performing goat, monkey, or dancing bear, may make his appearance before the admiring crowd.

At times a party of mimes or actors come round, and a rare treat is not seldom afforded by the *bara roopees*. *Bara* means twelve, and *roop* is an impersonation, a character. These "twelve characters" make up in all sorts of disguises. Their wardrobe is very limited, yet the number of people they personate, and their genuine acting talent would astonish you. With a projecting tooth and a few streaks of clay, they make up as a withered, trembling old hag, afflicted with palsy, rheumatism, and a hacking cough. They make friends with your bearer, and an old hat and coat transforms them into a planter, a missionary, or an officer. They whiten their faces, using false hair and moustache, and while you are chatting with your neighbour, a strange sahib suddenly and mysteriously seats himself by your side. You stare, and look at your host, who is generally in the secret, but a stranger, or

new comer, is often completely taken in. It is generally at night that they go through their personations, and when they have dressed for their part, they generally choose a moment when your attention is attracted by a cunning diversion. On looking up you are astounded to find some utter stranger standing behind your chair, or stalking solemnly round the room.

They personate a woman, a white lady, a sepoy policeman, almost any character. Some are especially good at mimicking the Bengalee Baboo, or the merchant from Cabool or Afghanistan with his fruits and cloths. A favourite *roop* with them is to paint one half of the face like a man. Everything is complete down to moustache, the folds of the puggree, the *lathee* or staff, indeed to the slightest detail. You would fancy you saw a stalwart, strapping Hindoo before you. He turns round, and lo, a bashful maiden. Her eyes are stained with *henna* (myrtle juice) or antimony. Her long hair neatly smoothed down is tied into a knot at the back, and glistens with the pearl-like ornaments. The taper arm is loaded with armlets and bracelets. The very toes are bedecked with rings. The bodice hides the taper waist and budding bosom, the tiny ear is loaded with jewelled earrings, the very nose is not forgotten, but is ornamented with a golden circle, bearing on its circumference a pearl of great price. The art, the posturing, the mimicry, is really admirable. A good *bara roopee* is well worth seeing, and amply earns the two or three rupees he gets as his reward.

The Pooneah seldom lasts more than the two days, but it is quite unique in its feudal character, and is one of the old-fashioned observances; a relic of the time when the planter was really looked upon as the father of his people, and when a little sentiment and mutual affection mingled with the purely business relations of landlord and tenant.

I delighted my ryots by importing some of our own country recreations, and setting the ploughmen to compete against

each other. I stuck a greasy bamboo firmly into the earth, putting a bag of copper coins at the top. Many tried to climb it, but when they came to the grease they came down "by the run." One fellow, however, filled his *kummerbund* with sand, and after much exertion managed to secure the prize. Wheeling the barrow blindfold also gave much amusement, and we made some boys bend their foreheads down to a stick and run round till they were giddy. Their ludicrous efforts then to jump over some water-pots, and run to a thorny bush, raised tumultuous peals of laughter. The poor boys generally smashed the pots, and ended by tumbling into the thorns.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Koosee jungles—Ferries—Jungle roads—The rhinoceros—We go to visit a neighbour—We lose our way and get belated—We fall into a quicksand—No ferry boat—Camping out on the sand—Two tigers close by—We light a fire—The boat at last arrives—Crossing the stream—Set fire to the boatman's hut—Swim the horses—They are nearly drowned—We again lose our way in the jungle—The towing path, and how boats are towed up the river—We at last reach the factory—News of rhinoceros in the morning—Off we start, but arrive too late—Death of the rhinoceros—His dimensions—Description—Habits—Rhinoceros in Nepaul—The old "Major Captān"—Description of Napaulese scenery—Immigration of Nepaulese—Their fondness for fish—They eat it putrid—Exclusion of Europeans from Nepaul—Resources of the country—Must sooner or later be opened up—Influences at work to elevate the people—Planters and factories chief of these—Character of the planter—His claims to consideration from government.

In the vast grass jungles that border the banks of the Koosee, stretching in great plains without an undulation for miles on either side, intersected by innumerable water-beds and dried up channels, there is plenty of game of all sorts. It is an impetuous, swiftly-flowing stream, dashing directly down from the mighty hills of Nepaul. So swift is its current and so erratic its course, that it frequently bursts its banks, and careers through the jungle, forming a new bed, and carrying away cattle and wild animals in its headlong rush.

The *ghauts* or ferries are constantly changing, and a long bamboo with a bit of white rag affixed, shows where the boats and boatmen are to be found. In many instances the track is a mere cattle path, and hundreds of cross openings, leading into the tall jungle grass, are apt to bewilder and mislead the

traveller. During the dry season these jungles are the resort of great herds of cattle and tame buffaloes, which trample down the dry stalks, and force their way into the innermost recesses of the wilderness of grass, which grows ten to twelve feet high. If you once lose your path you may wander for miles, until your weary horse is almost unable to stumble on. In such a case the best way is to take it coolly, and halloo till a herdsman or thatch-cutter comes to your rescue. The knowledge of the jungles displayed by these poor ignorant men is wonderful; they know every gully and watercourse, every ford and quicksand, and they betray not the slightest sign of fear, although they know that at any moment they may come across a herd of wild buffalo, a savage rhinoceros or even a royal tiger.

The tracks of rhinoceros are often seen, but although I have frequently had these pointed out to me when out tiger shooting, I only saw a very few of the animals themselves while I lived in that district.

The first occasion was after a night of discomfort such as I have fortunately seldom experienced. I had been away at a neighbouring factory in Purneah, some eighteen or twenty miles from my bungalow. My companion had been my predecessor in the management, and was supposed to be well acquainted with the country. We had gone over to one of the outworks across the river, and I had received charge of the place from him. It was a lonely solitary spot; the house was composed of grass walls plastered with mud, and had not been used for some time. F. proposed that we should ride over to see H., to whom he would introduce me, as he would be one of my nearest neighbours, and would give us a comfortable dinner and bed, which there was no chance of our procuring where we were.

We plunged at once into the mazy labyrinths of the jungle, and soon emerged on the high sandy downs, stretching mile beyond mile along the southern bank of the ever-changing

river. Having lost our way, we got to the factory after dark, but a friendly villager volunteered his services as guide, and led us safely to our destination. After a cheerful evening with H., we persuaded him to accompany us back next day. He took out his dogs, and we had a good course after a hare, killing two jackals, and sending back the dogs by the sweeper. At Burgamma, the outwork, we stopped to *tiffin* on some cold fowl we had brought with us. The old factory head man got us some milk, eggs, and *chupattics*; and about three in the afternoon we started for the head factory. In an evil moment F. proposed that, as we were near another outwork called *Fusseah*, we should diverge thither, I could take over charge and we could thus save a ride on another day. Not knowing anything of the country I acquiesced, and we reached Fusseah in time to see the place, and do all that was needful. It was a miserable tumbledown little spot, with four pair of vats; it had formerly been a good working factory, but the river had cut away most of its best lands, and completely washed away some of the villages, while the whole of the cultivation was fast relapsing into jungle.

"Debnarain Singh," the gomastha or head man, asked us to stay for the night, as he said we could never get home before dark. F., however, scouted the idea, and we resumed our way. The track, for it could not be called a road, led us through one or two jungle villages completely hidden by the dense bamboo clumps and long jungle grass. You can't see a trace of habitation till you are fairly on the village, and as the rice-fields are bordered with long strips of tall grass, the whole country presents the appearance of a uniform jungle. We got through the rice swamps, the villages, and the grass in safety, and as it was getting dark, emerged on the great plain of undulating ridgy sandbanks, that form the bed of the river during the annual floods. We had our *syces* (grooms) and two peons with us. We had to ride over nearly two miles of sand before we could reach the *ghat* where we expected the

ferry-boats, and, the main stream once crossed, we had only two miles further to reach the factory. We were getting both tired and hungry; a heavy dew was falling, and the night was raw and chill. It was dark, there was no moon to light our way, and the stars were obscured by the silently creeping fog, rising from the marshy hollows among the sand. All at once F., who was leading, called out that we were off the path, and before I could pull up, my poor old tired horse was floundering in a quicksand up to the girths; I threw myself off and tried to wheel him round. H. was behind us, and we cried to him to halt where he was. I was sinking at every movement up to the knees, when the syce came to my rescue, and took charge of the horse. F.'s syce ran to extricate his master and horse; the two peons kept calling, "Oh! my father, my father," the horses snorted, and struggled desperately in the tenacious and treacherous quicksand; but after a prolonged effort, we all got safely out, and rejoined H. on the firm ridge.

We now hallooed and shouted for the boatmen, but beyond the swish of the rapid stream to our right, or the plash of a falling bank as the swift current undermined it, no sound answered our repeated calls. We were wet and weary, but to go either backward or forward was out of the question. We were off the path, and the first step in any direction might lead us into another quicksand, worse perhaps than that from which we had just extricated ourselves. The horses were trembling in every limb. The syces cowered together and shivered with the cold. We ordered the two peons to try and reach the ghat, and see what had become of the boats, while we awaited their return where we were. The fog and darkness soon swallowed them up, and putting the best face on our dismal circumstances that we could, we lit our pipes and extended our jaded limbs on the damp sand.

For a time we could hear the shouts of the peons as they hallooed for the boatmen, and we listened anxiously for the

response, but there was none. We could hear the purling swish of the rapid stream, the crumbling banks falling into the current with a distant splash. Occasionally a swift rushing of wings overhead told us of the arrowy flight of diver or teal. Far in the distance twinkled the gleam of a herdsman's fire, the faint tinkle of a distant bell, or the subdued barking of a village dog for a moment alone broke the silence.

At times the hideous chorus of a pack of jackals woke the echoes of the night. Then, at no great distance, rose a hoarse booming cry, swelling on the night air, and subsiding into a lengthened growl. The syces started to their feet, the horses snorted with fear; and as the roar was repeated, followed closely by another to our left, and seemingly nearer, H. exclaimed "By Jove! there's a couple of tigers."

Sure enough so it was. It was the first time I had heard the roar of the tiger in his own domain, and I must confess that my sensations were not altogether pleasant. We set about collecting sticks and what roots of grass we could find, but on the sand-flats everything was wet, and it was so dark that we had to grope about on our hands and knees, and pick up whatever we came across.

With great difficulty we managed to light a small fire, and for about half-an-hour were nearly smothered by trying with inflated cheeks to coax it into blaze. The tigers continued to call at intervals, but did not seem to be approaching us. It was a long and weary wait, we were cold, wet, hungry, and tired; F., the cause of our misfortunes, had taken off his saddle, and with it for a pillow was now fast asleep. H. and I cowered over the miserable sputtering flame, and longed and wished for the morning. It was a miserable night, the hours seemed interminable, the dense volumes of smoke from the water-sodden wood nearly choked us. At last, after some hours spent in this miserable manner, we heard a faint halloo in the distance; it was now past eleven at night.

We returned the hail, and by-and-bye the peons returned bringing a boatman with them. The lazy rascals at the ghat, where we had proposed crossing, had gone home at nightfall, leaving their boats on the further bank. Our trusty peons, had gone five miles up the river, through the thick jungle, and brought a boat down with them from the next ghat to that where we were.

We now warily picked our way down to the edge of the bank. The boat seemed very fragile, and the current looked so swift and dangerous, that we determined to go across first ourselves, get the larger boat from the other side, light a fire and then bring over the horses. We embarked accordingly leaving the syces and horses behind us. The peons and boatmen pulled the boat a long way up stream by a rope then shooting out we were carried swiftly down stream, the dark shadow of the further bank seeming at a great distance. The boatman pushed vigorously at his bamboo pole, the water rippled and gurgled, and frothed and eddied around. Half-a-dozen times we thought our boat would topple over, but at length we got safely across, far below what we had proposed as our landing place.

We found the boats all right, and the boatman's hut, a mere collection of dry grass and a few old bamboos. As it could be replaced in an hour, and the material lay all around, we fired the hut, which soon blazed up, throwing a weird lurid glow on bank and stream, and disclosing far on the other bank our weary nags and shivering syces, looking very bedraggled and forlorn indeed. The leaping and crackling of the flames, and the genial warmth, invigorated us a little, and while I stayed behind to feed the fire, the others recrossed to bring the horses over.

With the previous fright, however, their long waiting, the blazing fire, and being unaccustomed to boats at night, the poor scared horses refused to enter the boat. The boats are flat-bottomed or broadly bulging, with a bamboo platform

strewn with grass in the centre. As a rule they have no protecting rails, and even in the daytime, when the current is strong and eddies numerous, they are very dangerous for horses. At all events, the poor brutes would not be led on to the platform, so there was nothing for it but to swim them across. The boat was therefore towed a long way up the bank, which on the farther side was nearly level with the current, but where the hut had stood was steep and slushy, and perhaps twenty feet high. This was where the deepest water ran, and where the current was swiftest. If the horses therefore missed the landing ghat or stage, which was cut sloping into the bank, there was a danger of their being swept away altogether and lost. However we determined on making the attempt. Entering the water, and holding the horses tightly by the head, with a leading rope attached, to be paid out in case of necessity; the boat shot out, the horses pawed the water, entering deeper and deeper, foot by foot, into the swiftly rushing silent stream. So long as they were in their depth and had footing, they were all right, but when they reached the middle of the river, the current, rushing with frightful velocity, swept them off their feet, and boat and horses began to go down stream. The horses, with lips apart showing their teeth firmly set, the lurid glare of the flame lighting up their straining eyeballs, the plashing of the water, the dark rapid current flowing noiselessly past; the rocking heaving boat, the dusky forms of syces, peons, and boatmen, standing out clear in the ruddy fire-light against the utter blackness of the night, composed a weird picture I can never forget.

The boat shot swiftly past the ghat, and came with a thump against the bank. It swung round into the stream again, but the boatman had luckily managed to scramble ashore, and his efforts and mine united, hauling on the mooring-rope, sufficed to bring her into the bank. The three struggling horses were yet in the current, trying bravely

to stem the furious rush of the river. The syces and my friends were holding hard to the tether-ropes, which were now at their full stretch. It was a most critical moment. Had they let go, the horses would have been swept away to form a meal for the alligators. They managed, however, to get in close to the bank, and here, although the water was still over their backs, they got a slight and precarious footing, and inch by inch struggled after the boat, which we were now pulling up to the landing place.

After a sore struggle, during which we thought more than once the gallant nags would never emerge from the water, they staggered up the bank, dripping, trembling, and utterly overcome with their exertions. It was my first introduction to the treacherous Koosee, and I never again attempted to swim a horse across at night. We led the poor tired creatures up to the fire, heaping on fresh bundles of thatching-grass, of which there was plenty lying about, the syces then rubbed them down, and shampooed their legs, till they began to take a little heart, whinnying as we spoke to them and caressed them.

After resting for nearly an hour, we replaced the saddles, and F., who by this time began to mistrust his knowledge of the jungles by night, allowed one of the peons, who was sure he knew every inch of the road, to lead the way. Leaving the smouldering flames to flicker and burn out in solitude, we again plunged into the darkness of the night, threading our way through the thick jungle grass, now loaded with dewy moisture, and dripping copious showers upon us from its high walls at either side of the narrow track. We crossed a rapid little stream, an arm of the main river, turned to the right, progressed a few hundred yards, turned to the left, and finally came to a dead stop, having again lost our way.

We heaped execrations on the luckless peon's head, and I suggested that we should make for the main stream, follow up the bank till we reached the next ghat, where I knew

there was a cart-road leading to the factory. Otherwise we might wander all night in the jungles, perhaps get into another quicksand, or come to some other signal grief. We accordingly turned round. We could hear the swish of the river at no great distance, and soon, stumbling over bushes and bursting through matted masses of grass, dripping with wet, and utterly tired and dejected, we reached the bank of the stream.

Here we had no difficulty in following the path. The river is so swift, that the only way boats are enabled to get up stream to take down the inland produce, is by having a few coolies or boatmen to drag the boat up against the current by towing-lines. This is called *gooning*. The goon-ropes are attached to the mast of the boat. At the free end is a round bit of bamboo. The towing-coolie places this against his shoulder, and slowly and laboriously drags the boat up against the current. We were now on this towing-path and after riding for nearly four miles we reached the ghat, struck into the cart-road, and without further misadventure reached the factory about four in the morning, utterly fagged and worn out.

About eight in the morning my bearer woke me out of a deep sleep, with the news that there was a *gaerha*, that is, a rhinoceros, close to the factory. We had some days previously heard it rumoured that there were *two* rhinoceroses in the *Battabarree* jungles, so I at once roused my soundly-sleeping friends. Swallowing a hasty morsel of toast and a cup of coffee, we mounted our ponies, sent our guns on ahead, and rode off for the village where the rhinoceros was reported to be. As we rode hurriedly along we could see natives running in the same direction as ourselves, and one of my men came up panting and breathless to confirm the news about the rhinoceros, with the unwelcome addition that Premnarain Singh, a young neighbouring Zemindar, had gone in pursuit of it with his elephant and guns. We hurried

on, and just then heard the distant report of a shot, followed quickly by two more. We tried to take a short cut across country through some rice-fields, but our ponies sank in the boggy ground, and we had to retrace our way to the path.

By the time we got to the village we found an excited crowd of over a thousand natives, dancing and gesticulating round the prostrate carcase of the rhinoceros. The Baboo and his party had found the poor brute firmly embedded in a quicksand. With organised effort they might have secured the prize alive, and could have sold him in Calcutta for at least a thousand rupees, but they were too excited, and blazed away three shots into the helpless beast. "Many hands make light work," so the crowd soon had the dead animal extricated, rolled him into the creek, and floated him down to the village, where we found them already beginning to hack and hew the fish, completely spoiling the skin, and properly completing the butchery. We were terribly vexed that we were too late, but endeavoured to stop the stupid destruction that was going on. The body measured eleven feet three inches from the snout to the tail, and stood six feet nine. The horn was six and a half inches long, and the girth a little over ten feet. We put the best face on the matter, congratulated the Baboo with very bad grace, and asked him to get the skin cut up properly.

Cut in strips from the under part of the ribs and along the belly, the skin makes magnificent riding-whips. The bosses on the shoulder and sides are made into shields by the natives, elaborately ornamented and much prized. The horn, however, is the most coveted acquisition. It is believed to have peculiar virtues, and is popularly supposed by its mere presence in a house to mitigate the pains of maternity. A rhinoceros horn is often handed down from generation to generation as an heirloom, and when a birth is about to take place the anxious husband often gets a loan of the precious

treasure, after which he has no fears for the safe issue of the interesting event.

The flesh of the rhinoceros is eaten by all classes. It is one of the five animals that a Brahmin is allowed to eat by the *Shastras*. They were formerly much more common in these jungles, but of late years very few have been killed. When they take up their abode in a piece of jungle they are not easily dislodged. They are fierce, savage brutes, and do not scruple to attack an elephant when they are hard pressed by the hunter. When they wish to leave a locality where they have been disturbed, they will make for some distant point, and march on with dogged and inflexible purpose. Some have been known to travel eighty miles in the twenty-four hours, through thick jungle, over rivers, and through swamp and quicksand. Their sense of hearing is very acute, and they are very easily roused to fury. One peculiarity often noticed by sportsmen is, that they always go to the same spot when they want to obey the calls of nature. Mounds of their dung are sometimes seen in the jungle, and the tracks show that the rhinoceros pays a daily visit to this one particular spot.

In Nepaul, and along the *terai* or wooded slopes of the frontier, they are more numerous; but "Jung Bahadur," the late ruler of Nepaul, would allow no one to shoot them but himself. I remember the wailing lament of a Nepaul officer with whom I was out shooting, when I happened to fire at and wound one of the protected beasts. It was in Nepaul, among a cluster of low woody hills, with a brawling stream dashing through the precipitous channel worn out of the rocky, boulder-covered dell. The rhinoceros was up the hill slightly above me, and we were beating up for a tiger that we had seen go ahead of the line.

In my eagerness to bag a "rhino" I quite forgot the interdict, and fired an Express bullet into the shoulder of the animal, as he stood broadside on, staring stupidly at me.

He staggered, and made as if he would charge down the hill. The old "Major Captān," as they called our sporting host, was shouting out to me not to fire. The *mahouts* and beaters were petrified with horror at my presumption. I fancy they expected an immediate order for my decapitation, or for my ears to be cut off at the very least, but feeling I might as well be "in for a pound as for a penny," I fired again, and tumbled the huge brute over, with a bullet through the skull behind the ear. The old officer was horror-stricken, and would allow no one to go near the animal. He would not even let me get down to measure it, being so terrified lest the affair should reach the ears of his formidable lord and ruler, that he hurried us off from the scene of my transgression as quickly as he could.

The old Major Captān was a curious character. The government of Nepaul is purely military. All executive and judicial functions are carried on by military officers. After serving a certain time in the army, they get rewarded for good service by being appointed to the executive charge of a district. So far as I could make out, they seem to farm the revenue much as is done in Turkey. They must send in so much to the Treasury, and anything over they keep for themselves. Their administration of justice is rough and ready. Fines, corporal punishment, and in the case of heinous crimes, mutilation and death are their penalties. There is a tax of *kind* on all produce, and licences to cut timber bring in a large revenue. A protective tariff is levied on all goods or produce passing the frontier from British territory, and no European is allowed to travel in the country, or to settle and trade there. In the lower valleys there are magnificent stretches of land suitable for indigo, tea, rice, and other crops. The streams are numerous, moisture is plentiful, the soil is fertile, and the slopes of the hills are covered with splendid timber, a great quantity of which is cut and floated down the Gunduck, Bagmuttee, Koosee, and

other streams during the rainy season. It is used principally for beams, rafters and railway sleepers.

The people are jealous of intrusion and suspicious of strangers, but as I was with an official, they generally came out in great numbers to gaze as we passed through a village. The country does not seem so thickly populated as in our territory, and the cultivators had a more well-to-do look. They possess vast numbers of cattle. The houses have conical roofs, and great quadrangular sheds, roofed with a flat covering of thatch, are erected all round the houses, for the protection of the cattle at night. The taxes must weigh heavily on the population. The executive officer, when he gets charge of a district, removes all the subordinates who have been acting under his predecessor. When I asked the old Major if this would not interfere with the efficient administration of justice, and the smooth working of his revenue and executive functions, he gave a funny leer, almost a wink, and said it was much more satisfactory to have men of your own working under you, the fact being, that with his own men he could more securely wring from the ryots the uttermost farthing they could pay, and was more certain of getting his own share of the spoil.

With practically irresponsible power, and only answerable directly to his immediate military superior, an unscrupulous man may harry and harass a district pretty much as he chooses. Our old Major seemed to be civil and lenient, but in some districts the exactions and extortions of the rulers have driven many of the hard-working Nepaulese over the border into our territory. Our landholders or Zemindars, having vast areas of untilled land, are only too glad to encourage this immigration, and give the exiles, whom they find hard-working, industrious tenants, long leases on easy terms. The new comers are very independent, and strenuously resist any encroachment on what they consider their rights. If an attempt is made to raise their rent, even

equitably, the land having increased in value, they will resist the attempt "tooth and nail," and take every advantage the law affords to oppose it. They are very fond of litigation, and are mostly able to afford the expense of a lawsuit. I generally found it answer better to call them together and reason quietly with them, submitting any point in dispute to an arbitration of parties mutually selected.

Nearly all the rivers in Nepaul are formed principally from the melting of the snow on the higher ranges. A vast body of water descends annually into the plains from the natural surface drainage of the country, but the melting of the snows is the main source of the river system. Many of the hill streams, and it is particularly observable at some seasons in the Koosee, have a regular daily rise and fall. In the early morning you can often ford a branch of the river, which by midday has become a swiftly-rolling torrent, filling the channel from bank to bank. The water is intensely cold, and few or no fish are to be found in the mountain streams of Nepaul. When the Nepaulese come down to the plains on business, pleasure, or pilgrimage, their great treat is a mighty banquet of fish. For two or three *annas* a fish of several pounds weight can easily be purchased. They revel on this unwonted fare, eating to repletion, and very frequently making themselves ill in consequence. When Jung Bahadur came down through Chumparun to attend the *durbar* of the lamented Earl Mayo, cholera broke out in his camp, brought on simply by the enormous quantities of fish, often not very fresh or wholesome, which his guards and camp-followers consumed.

Large quantities of dried fish are sent up to Nepaul, and exchanged for rice and other grain, or horns, hides, and blankets. The fish-drying is done very simply in the sun. It is generally left till it is half putrid and taints the air for miles. The sweltering, half-rotting mass, packed in filthy

bags, and slung on ponies or bullocks, is sent over the frontier to some village bazaar in Nepaul. The track of a consignment of this horrible filth can be recognised from very far away. The perfume hovers on the road, and as you are riding up and get the first sniff of the putrid odour, you know at once that the Nepaulese market is being recruited by a *fresh* accession of very *stale* fish. If the taste is at all equal to the smell, the rankest witches' broth ever brewed in reeking cauldron would probably be preferable. Over the frontier there seems to be few roads, merely bullock tracks. Most of the transporting of goods is done by bullocks, and intercommunication must be slow and costly. I believe that near Katmandoo, the capital, the roads and bridges are good, and kept in tolerable repair. There is an arsenal where they manufacture modern munitions of war. Their soldiers are well disciplined, fairly well equipped, and form excellent fighting material.

Our policy of annexation, so far as India is concerned, may perhaps be now considered as finally abandoned. We have no desire to annex Nepaul, but surely this system of utter isolation, of jealous exclusion at all hazards of English enterprise and capital, might be broken down to a mutual community of interest, a full and free exchange of products, and a reception by Nepaul without fear and distrust of the benefits our capitalists and pioneers could give the country by opening out its resources, and establishing the industries of the West on its fertile slopes and plains. I am no politician, and know nothing of the secret springs of policy that regulate our dealings with Nepaul, but it does seem somewhat weak and puerile to allow the Nepaulese free access to our territories, and an unprotected market in our towns for all their produce, while the British subject is rigorously excluded from the country, his productions saddled with a heavy protective duty, and the representative of our Government himself treated more as a prisoner in honour-

able confinement, than as the accredited ambassador of a mighty empire.

I may be utterly wrong. There may be weighty reasons of State for this condition of things, but it is a general feeling among Englishmen in India, that *we* have to do all the GIVE and our Oriental neighbours do all the TAKE. The un-official English mind in India does not see the necessity for the painfully deferential attitude we invariably take in our dealings with native states. The time has surely come when Oriental mistrust of our intentions should be stoutly battled with. There is room in Nepaul for hundreds of factories, for tea-gardens, fruit-groves, spice-plantations, woollen-mills, saw-mills, and countless other industries. Mineral products are reported of unusual richness. In the great central valley the climate approaches that of England. The establishment of productive industries would be a work of time, but so long as this ridiculous policy of isolation is maintained, and the exclusion of English tourists, sportsmen, or observers carried out in all its present strictness, we can never form an adequate idea of the resources of the country. The Nepaulese themselves cannot progress. I am convinced that a frank and unconstrained intercourse between Europeans and natives would create no jealousy and antagonism, but would lead to the development of a country singularly blessed by nature, and open a wide field for Anglo-Saxon energy and enterprise. It does seem strange, with all our vast territory of Hindostan accurately mapped out and known, roads and railways, canals and embankments, intersecting it in all directions, that this interesting corner of the globe, lying contiguous to our territory for hundreds of miles, should be less known than the interior of Africa, or the barren solitudes of the ice-bound Arctic regions.

In these rich valleys hundreds of miles of the finest and most fertile lands in Asia lie covered by dense jungle, waiting for labour and capital. For the present we have enough

to do in our own possessions to reclaim the uncultured wastes; but considering the rapid increase of population, the avidity with which land is taken up, the daily increasing use of all modern labour-saving appliances, the time must very shortly come when capital and energy will need new outlets, and one of the most promising of these is in Nepaul. The rapid changes which have come over the face of rural India, especially in these border districts, within the last twenty years, might well make the most thoughtless pause. Land has increased in value more than two-fold. The price of labour and of produce has kept more than equal pace. Machinery is whirring and clanking, where a few years ago a steam whistle would have startled the natives out of their wits. With cheap, easy, and rapid communication, a journey to any of the great cities is now thought no more of than a trip to a distant village in the same district was thought of twenty years ago. Everywhere are the signs of progress. New industries are opening up. Jungle is fast disappearing. Agriculture has wonderfully improved; and wherever an indigo factory has been built, progress has taken the place of stagnation, industry and thrift that of listless indolence and shiftless apathy. A spirit has moved in the valley of dry bones and has clothed with living flesh the gaunt skeletons produced by ignorance, disease, and want. The energy and intelligence of the planter has breathed on the stagnant waters of the Hindoo intellect the breath of life, and the living tide is heaving, full of activity, purging by its resistless, ever-moving pulsations the formerly stagnant mass of its impurities, and making it a life-giving sea of active industry and progress.

Let any unprejudiced observer see for himself if it be not so; let him go to those districts where British capital and energy are not employed; let him leave the planting districts, and go up to the wastes of Oudh, or the purely native districts of the North-west, where there are no Europeans

but the officials in the *station*. He will find fewer and worse roads, fewer wells, worse constructed houses, much ruder cultivation, less activity and industry; more dirt, disease, and desolation; less intelligence; more intolerance; and a peasantry morally, mentally, physically, and in every way inferior to those who are brought into daily contact with the Anglo-Saxon planters and gentlemen, and have imbibed somewhat of their activity and spirit of progress. And yet these are the men whom successive Lieutenant-Governors, and Governments generally, have done their best to thwart and obstruct. They have been misrepresented, held up to obloquy, and foully slandered; they have been described as utterly base, fattening on the spoils of a cowed and terror-ridden peasantry. Utterly unscrupulous, fearing neither God nor man, hesitating at no crime, deterred by no consideration from oppressing their tenantry, and compassing their interested ends by the vilest frauds.

Such was the picture drawn of the indigo planter not so many years ago. There may have been much in the past over which we would willingly draw the veil, but at the present moment I firmly believe that the planters of Behar—and I speak as an observant student of what has being going on in India—have done more to elevate the peasantry, to rouse them into vitality, and to improve them in every way, than all the other agencies that have been at work with the same end in view.

The Indian Government to all appearance must always work in extremes. It never seems to hit the happy medium. The Lieutenant-Governor for the time being impresses every department under him too strongly with his own individuality. The planters, who are an intelligent and independent body of men, have seemingly always been obnoxious to the ideas of a perfectly despotic and irresponsible ruler. In spite, however, of all difficulties and drawbacks, they have held their own. I know that the poor

people and small cultivators look up to them with respect and affection. They find in them ready and sympathizing friends, able and willing to shield them from the exactions of their own more powerful and uncharitable fellow-countrymen. Half, nay nine-tenths, of the stories against planters, are got up by the money-lenders, the petty Zemindars, and wealthy villagers, who find the planter competing with them for land and labour, and raising the price of both. The poor people look to the factory as a never-failing resource when all else fails, and but for the assistance it gives in money, or seed, or plough bullocks and implements of husbandry, many a struggling, hard-working tenant would inevitably go to the wall, or become inextricably entangled in the meshes of the Bunneah and money-lender.

I assert as a fact that the great majority of villagers in Behar would rather go to the factory, and have their sahib adjudicate on their dispute, than take it into Court. The officials in the indigo districts know this, and as a rule are very friendly with the planters. But not long since, an official was afraid to dine at a planter's house, fearing he might be accused of planter proclivities. In no other country in the world would the same jealousy of men who open out and enrich a country, and who are loyal, intelligent, and educated citizens, be displayed; but there are high quarters in which the old feeling of the East India Company, that all who were not in the service must be adventurers and interlopers, seems not wholly to have died out.

That there have been abuses no one denies; but for years past the majority of the planters in Tirhoot, Chupra, and Chumparun, and in the indigo districts generally, not merely the managers, but the proprietors and agents, have been laudably and loyally stirring, in spite of failures, reduced prices, and frequent bad seasons, to elevate the standard of their peasantry, and establish the indigo system on a fair and equitable basis. During the years when I was an assistant

and manager on indigo estates, the rates for payment of indigo to cultivators nearly doubled, although prices for the manufactured article remained stationary. In well-managed factories, the forcible seizure of carts and ploughs, and the enforcement of labour, which is an old charge against planters, was unknown; and the payment of tribute, common under the old feudal system, and styled *furmaish*, had been allowed to fall into desuetude. The NATIVE Zemindars or landholders, however, still jealously maintain their rights, and harsh exactions were often made by them on the cultivators on the occasions of domestic events, such as births, marriages, deaths, and the like, in the families of the landowners. For years these exactions or feudal payments by the ryot to the Zemindar have been commuted by the factories into a lump sum in cash, when villages have been taken in farm, and this sum has been paid to the Zemindar as an enhanced rent. In the majority of cases it has not been levied from the cultivators, but the whole expense has been borne by the factory. In individual instances resort may have been had to unworthy tricks to harass the ryots, the factory middlemen having often been oppressors and tyrants; but as a body, the indigo planters of the present day have sternly set their faces to put down these oppressions, and have honestly striven to mete out even-handed justice to their tenants and dependants. With the spread of education and intelligence, the development of agricultural knowledge and practical science, and the vastly improved communication by roads, bridges, and ferries, in bringing about all of which the planting community themselves have been largely instrumental, there can be little doubt that these old-fashioned charges against the planters as a body will cease, and public opinion will be brought to bear on any one who may promote his own interests by cruelty or rapacity, instead of doing his business on an equitable commercial basis, giving every man his due, relying on skill, energy, industry, and integrity, to

promote the best interests of his factory; gaining the esteem and affection of his people by liberality, kindness, and strict justice.

It can never be expected that a ryot can grow indigo at a loss to himself, or at a lower rate of profit than that which the cultivation of his other ordinary crops would give him, without at least some compensating advantages. With all his poverty and supposed stupidity, he is keenly alive to his own interests, quite able to hold his own in matters affecting his pocket. I have no hesitation in saying that the steady efforts which have been made by all the best planters to treat the ryot fairly, to give him justice, to encourage him with liberal aid and sympathy, and to put their mutual relations on a fair business footing, are now bearing fruit, and will result in the cultivation and manufacture of indigo in Upper Bengal becoming, as it deserves to become, one of the most firmly established, fairly conducted, and justly administered industries in India. That it may be so is, as I know, the earnest wish, as it has long been the dearest object, of my best friends among the planters of Behar.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The tiger—His habitat—Shooting on foot—Modes of shooting—A tiger hunt on foot—The scene of the hunt—The beat—Incidents of the hunt—Fireworks—The tiger charges—The elephant bolts—The tigress will not break—We kill a half-grown cub—Try again for the tigress—Unsuccessful—Exaggerations in tiger stories—My authorities The brothers S.—Ferocity and structure of the tiger—His devastations—His frame-work, teeth, &c.—A tiger at bay—His unsociable habits—Fight between tiger and tigress—Young tigers—Power and strength of the tiger—Examples—His cowardice—Charge of a wounded tiger—Incidents connected with wounded tigers—A spined tiger—Boldness of young tigers—Cruelty—Cunning—Night scenes in the jungle—Tiger killed by a wild boar—His cautious habits—General remarks.

IN the foregoing chapters I have tried to perform my promise, to give a general idea of our daily life in India; our toils and trials, our sports, our pastimes, and our general pursuits. No record of Indian sport, however, would be complete without some illusion to the kingly tiger, and no one can live long near the Nepaul frontier, without at some time or other having an encounter with the royal robber—the striped and whiskered monarch of the jungle.

He is always to be found in the Terai forests, and although very occasionally indeed met with in Tirhoot, where the population is very dense, and waste lands infrequent, he is yet often to be encountered in the solitudes of Oudh or Goruckpore, has been shot at and killed near Bettiah, and at our pig-sticking ground near Kuderent. In North Bhaugulpore and Purneah he may be said to be ALWAYS at home, as he can be met there, if you search for him, at all seasons of the year.

In some parts of India, notably in the Deccan, and in some

districts on the Bombay side, and even in the Soonderbunds near Calcutta, sportsmen and shekarries go after the tiger on foot. I must confess that this seems to me a mad thing to do. With every advantage of weapon, with the most daring courage, and the most imperturbable coolness, I think a man no fair match for a tiger in his native jungles. There are men now living who have shot numbers of tigers on foot, but the numerous fatal accidents recorded every year, plainly show the danger of such a mode of shooting.

In central India, in the North-west, indeed in most districts where elephants are not easily procurable, it is customary to erect *mychans* or bamboo platforms on trees. A line of beaters, with tom-toms, drums, fireworks, and other means for creating a din, are then sent into the jungle, to beat the tigers up to the platform on which you sit and wait. This is often a successful mode if you secure an advantageous place; but accidents to the beaters are very common, and it is at best a weary and vexatious mode of shooting, as after all your trouble the tiger may not come near your *mychan*, or give you the slightest glimpse of his beautiful skin.

I have been out after tiger on foot but on few occasions. One was in the sal jungles in Oudh. A neighbour of mine, a most intimate and dear friend, whom I had nicknamed the "General," and a young friend, Fullerton, were with me. A tigress and cub were reported to be in a dense patch of *nurkool* jungle, on the banks of the creek which divided the General's cultivation from mine. The nurkool is a tall, feathery-looking cane, very much relished by elephants. It grows in dense brakes, and generally in damp, boggy ground, affording complete shade and shelter for wild animals, and is a favourite haunt of pig, wolf, tiger, and buffalo.

We had only one elephant, the use of which Fullerton had got from a neighbouring Baboo. It was not a staunch animal, so we put one of our men in the howdah, with a plentiful supply of bombs, a kind of native firework, enclosed in a

clay case, which burns like a huge squib, and sets fire to the jungle. Along with the elephant we had a line of about one hundred coolies, and several men with drums and tom-toms. Fullerton took the side nearest the river, as it was possible the brute might sneak out that way, and make her escape along the bank. The General's shekarry remained behind, in rear of the line of beaters, in case the tigress might break the line, and try to escape by the rear. My *Gomasta*, the General, and myself, then took up positions behind trees all along the side of the glade or dell in which was the bit of nurkool jungle.

It was a small basin, sloping gently down to the creek from the sal jungle, which grew up dark and thick all around. A margin of close sward, as green and level as a billiard-table, encircled the glade, and in the basin the thick nurkool grew up close, dense, and high, like a rustling barrier of living green. In the centre was the decaying stump of a mighty forest monarch, with its withered arms stretching out their bleached and shattered lengths far over the waving feathery tops of the nurkool below.

The General and I cut down some branches, which we stuck in the ground before us. I had a fallen log in front of me, on which I rested my guns. I had a naked *kookree* ready to hand, for we were sure that the tigress was in the swamp, and I did not know what might happen. I did not half like this style of shooting, and wished I was safely seated on the back of "JORROCKS," my faithful old Bhaugulpore elephant. The General whistled as a sign for the beat to begin. The coolies dashed into the thicket. The stately elephant slowly forced his ponderous body through the crashing swaying brake. The rattle of the tom-toms and rumble of the drums, mingled with the hoarse shouts and cries of the beaters, the fiery rush of sputtering flame, and the loud report as each bomb burst, with the huge volumes of blinding smoke, and the scent of gunpowder that came on

the breeze, told us that the bombs were doing their work. The jungle was too green to burn; but the fireworks raised a dense sulphurous smoke, which penetrated among the tall stems of the nurkool, and by the waving and crashing of the tall swaying canes, the heaving of the howdah, with the red puggree of the peon, and the gleaming of the staves and weapons, we could see that the beat was advancing.

As they neared the large withered tree in the centre of the brake, the elephant curled up his trunk and trumpeted. This was a sure sign there was game afoot. We could see the peon in the howdah leaning over the front bar, and eagerly peering into the recesses of the thicket before him. He lit one of the bombs, and hurled it right up against the bole of the tree. It hissed and sputtered, and the smoke came curling over the reeds in dense volumes. A roar followed that made the valley ring again. We heard a swift rush. The elephant turned tail, and fled madly away, crashing through the matted brake that crackled and tore under his tread. The howdah swayed wildly, and the peon clung tenaciously on to the top bar with all his desperate might. The *mahout*, or elephant-driver, tried in vain to check the rush of the frightened brute, but after repeated sounding whacks on the head he got him to stop, and again turn round. Meantime the cries and shouting had ceased, and the beaters came pouring from the jungle by twos and threes, like the frightened inhabitants of some hive or ant-heap. Some in their hurry came tumbling out headlong; others, with their faces turned backwards to see if anything was in pursuit of them, got entangled in the reeds, and fell prone on their hands and knees. One fellow had just emerged from the thick cover, when another terrified compatriot dashed out in blind unreasoning fear close behind him. The first one thought the tiger was on him. With one howl of anguish and dismay he fled as fast as he could run, and the General and I, who had witnessed the episode,

could not help uniting in a resounding peal of laughter, that did more to bring the scared coolies to their senses than anything else we could have done.

There was no doubt now of the tiger's whereabouts. One of the beaters gave us a most graphic description of its appearance and proportions. According to him it was bigger than an elephant, had a mouth as wide as a coal scuttle, and eyes that glared like a thousand suns. From all this we inferred that there was a full-grown tiger or tigress in the jungle. We re-formed the line of beaters, and once more got the elephant to enter the patch. The same story was repeated. No sooner did they get near the old tree, than the tigress again charged with a roar, and our valiant coolies and the chicken-hearted elephant vacated the jungle as fast as their legs could carry them. This happened twice or thrice. The tigress charged every time, but would not leave her safe cover. The elephant wheeled round at every charge, and would not show fight. Fullerton got into the howdah, and fired two shots into the spot where the tigress was lying. He did not apparently wound her, but the reports brought her to the charge once more, and the elephant, by this time fairly tired of the game, and thoroughly demoralised with fear, bolted right away, and nearly cracked poor Fullerton's head against the branch of a tree.

We could plainly see, that with only one elephant we could never dislodge the tigress, so making the coolies beat up the patch in lines, we shot several pig and a hogdeer, and adjourned for something to eat by the bank of the creek. We had been trying to oust the tigress for over four hours, but she was as wise as she was savage, and refused to become a mark for our bullets in the open. After lunch we made another grand attempt. We promised the coolies double pay if they roused the tigress to flight. The elephant was forced again into the nurkool very much against his will, and the mahout was promised a reward if we got the tigress. The din

this time was prodigious, and strange to say they got quite close up to the big withered tree without the usual roar and charge. This seemed somewhat to stimulate the beaters and the old elephant. The coolies redoubled their cries, smote among the reeds with their heavy staves, and shouted encouragement to each other. Right in the middle of the line, as it seemed to us from the outside, there was then a fierce roar and a mighty commotion. Cries of fear and consternation arose, and forth poured the coolies again, helter skelter, like so many rabbits from a warren when a weasel or ferret has entered the burrow. Right before me a huge old boar and a couple of sows came plunging forth. I let them get on a little distance from the brake, and then with my "Express" I rolled over the tusker and one of his companions and just then the General shouted out to me, "There's the tiger!"

I looked in the direction of his levelled gun, and there at the edge of the jungle was a handsome, half-grown tiger cub, beautifully marked, his tail switching angrily from side to side, and his twitching retracted lips and bristling moustache drawn back like those of a vicious cat, showing his gleaming polished fangs and teeth.

The General had a fine chance, took a steady aim, and shot the young savage right through the heart. The handsome young tiger gave one convulsive leap into the air and fell on his side stone dead. We could not help a cheer, and shouted for Fullerton, who soon came running up. We got some coolies together, but they were frightened to go near the dead animal, as we could plainly hear the old vixen inside snarling and snapping, for all the world like an angry terrier. We heard her half-suppressed growl and snarl. She was evidently in a fine temper. How we wished for a couple of staunch elephants to hunt her out of the cane. It was no use, however, the elephant would not go near the jungle again. The coolies were thoroughly scared, and had got plenty of pork and venison to eat, so did not care for

anything else. We collected a lot of tame buffaloes, and tried to drive them through the jungle, but the coolies had lost heart, and would not exert themselves; so we had to content ourselves with the cub, who measured six feet three inches (a very handsome skin it was), and very reluctantly had to leave the savage mother alone. I never saw a brute charge so persistently as she did. She always rushed forward with a succession of roars, and was very wary and cunning. She never charged home, she did not even touch the elephant or any of the coolies, but evidently trusted to frighten her assailants away by a bold show and a fierce outcry.

We went back two days after with five elephants, which with great difficulty we had got together,* and thoroughly beat the patch of nurkool, killed a lot of pig and a couple of deer, shot an alligator, and destroyed over thirty of its eggs, which we discovered on the bank of the creek; and returning in the evening shot a nilghau and a black buck, but the tigress had disappeared. She was gone, and we grumbled sorely at our bad luck. It was doubtless intensely exciting work, and both tiger and cub must have passed close to us several times, hidden by the jungle. We were only about thirty paces from the edge of the brake, and both animals must have seen us, although the dense cover hid them from our sight. I certainly prefer shooting from the howdah.

Although it is beyond the scope of this book to enter into a detailed account of the tiger, discussing his structure, habits, and characteristics, it may aid the reader if I give a sketchy general outline of some of the more prominent points of interest connected with the monarch of the jungle, the cruel, cunning, ferocious king of the cat tribe, the beautiful but dreaded tiger.

* This was at the time the Prince of Wales was shooting in Nepaul, not very far from where I was then stationed. Most of the elephants in the district had been sent up to his Royal Highness's camp, or were on their way to take part in the ceremonies of the grand *Durbar* in Delhi.

I should prefer to show his character by incidents with which I have myself been connected, but as many statements have been made about tigers that are utterly absurd and untrue, and as tiger stories generally contain a good deal of exaggeration, and a natural scepticism unconsciously haunts the reader when tigers and tiger shooting are the topics, it may be as well to state once for all, that I shall put down nothing that cannot be abundantly substantiated by reference to my own sporting journals, or those of the brothers S., friends and fellow-sportsmen of my own. To G. S. I am under great obligations for many interesting notes he has given me about tiger shooting. Joe, his brother, was long our captain in our annual shooting parties. Their father and *his* brother, the latter still alive and a keen shot, were noted sportsmen at a time when game was more plentiful, shooting more generally practised, and when to be a good shot meant more than average excellence. The two brothers between them have shot, I dare say, more than four hundred and fifty male and female tigers, and serried rows of skulls ranged round the billiard-rooms in their respective factories bear witness to their love of sport and the deadly accuracy of their aim. Under their auspices I began my tiger shooting, and as they knew every inch of the jungles, had for years been observant students of nature, were acquainted with all the haunts and habits of every wild creature, I acquired a fund of information about the tiger which I knew could be depended on. It was the result of actual observation and experience, and in most instances it was corroborated by my own experience in my more limited sphere of action. Every incident I adduce, every deduction I draw, every assertion I make regarding tigers and tiger shooting can be plentifully substantiated, and abundantly testified to, by my brother sportsmen of Purneah and Bhaugulpore. From their valuable information I have got most of the material for this part of my book.

Of the order FERAE, the family *felidae*, there is perhaps no animal in the wide range of all zoology so eminently fitted for destruction as the tiger. His whole structure and appearance, combining beauty and extreme agility with prodigious strength, his ferocity, and his cunning mark him out as the very type of a beast of prey. He is the largest of the cat tribe, the most formidable race of quadrupeds on earth. He is the most bloodthirsty in habit, and the most dreaded by man. Whole tracts of fertile fields, reclaimed from the wild luxuriance of matted jungle, and waving with golden grain, have been deserted by the patient husbandmen, and allowed to relapse into tangled thicket and uncultured waste, on account of the ravages of this formidable robber. Whole villages have been depopulated by tigers, the mouldering door-posts and crumbling rafters, met with at intervals in the heart of the solitary jungle, alone marking the spot where a thriving hamlet once sent up the curling smoke from its humble hearths, until the scourge of the wilderness, the dreaded "man-eater," took up his station near it, and drove the inhabitants in terror from the spot. Whole herds of valuable cattle have been literally destroyed by the tiger. His habitat is in those jungles, and near those localities, which are most highly prized by the herdsmen of India for their pastures, and the numbers of cattle that yearly fall before his thirst for blood, and his greed for living prey, are almost incredible. I have scarcely known a day pass, during the hot months, on the banks of the Koosee, that news of a *kill* has not been sent in from some of the villages in my *ilaka*, and as a tiger eats once in every four or five days, and oftener if he can get the chance, the number of animals that fall a prey to his insatiable appetite, over the extent of Hindostan, must be enormous. The annual destruction of tame animals by tigers alone is almost incredible, and when we add to this the wild buffalo, the deer, the pig, and other untamed animals, to say nothing of smaller creatures, we can

form some conception of the destruction caused by the tiger in the course of a year.

His whole frame is put together to effect destruction. In cutting up a tiger you are impressed with this. His tendons are masses of nerve and muscle as hard as steel. The muscular development is tremendous. Vast bands and layers of muscle overlap each other. Strong ligaments, which you can scarcely cut through, and which soon blunt the sharpest knife, unite the solid, freely-playing, loosely-jointed bones. The muzzle is broad, and short, and obtuse. The claws are completely retractile. The jaws are short. There are two false molars, two grinders above, and the same number below. The upper carnivorous tooth has three lobes, and an obtuse heel; the lower has two lobes, pointed and sharp, and no heel. There is one very small tuberculous tooth above as an auxiliary, and then the strong back teeth. The muscles of the jaws are of tremendous power. I have come across the remains of a buffalo killed by a tiger, and found all the large bones, even the big strong bones of the pelvis and large joints, cracked and crunched like so many walnuts, by the powerful jaws of the fierce brute.

The eye is peculiarly brilliant, and when glaring with fury it is truly demoniac. With his bristles rigid, the snarling lips drawn back disclosing the formidable fangs, the body crouching for his spring, and the lithe tail puffed up and swollen, and lashing restlessly from side to side, each muscle tense and strung, and an undulating movement perceptible like the motions of a huge snake, a crouching tiger at bay is a sight that strikes a certain chill to the heart of the onlooker. When he bounds forward, with a hoarse barking roar that reverberates among the mazy labyrinths of the interminable jungle, he tests the steadiest nerve and almost daunts the bravest heart.

In their habits they are very unsociable, and are only seen together during the amatory season. When that is over the

male tiger betakes him again to his solitary predatory life, and the tigress becomes, if possible, fiercer than he is, and buries herself in the gloomiest recesses of the jungle. When the young are born, the male tiger has often been known to devour his offspring, and at this time they are very savage and quarrelsome. Old G., a planter in Purneah, once came across a pair engaged in deadly combat. They writhed and struggled on the ground, the male tiger striking tremendous blows on the chest and flanks of his consort, and tearing her skin in strips, while the tigress buried her fangs in his neck, tearing and worrying with all the ferocity of her nature. She was battling for her young. G. shot both the enraged combatants, and found that one of the cubs had been mangled, evidently by his unnatural father. Another, which he picked up in a neighbouring bush, was unharmed, but did not survive long. Pairs have often been shot in the same jungle, but seldom in close proximity, and it accords with all experience that they betray an aversion to each other's society, except at the one season. This propensity of the father to devour his offspring seems to be due to jealousy or to blind unreasoning hate. To save her offspring the female always conceals her young, and will often move far from the jungle which she usually frequents.

When the cubs are able to kill for themselves, she seems to lose all pleasure in their society, and by the time they are well grown she usually has another batch to provide for. I have, however, shot a tigress with a full-grown cub—the hunt described in the last chapter is an instance—and on several occasions, my friend George has shot the mother with three or four full-grown cubs in attendance. This is, however, rare, and only happens, I believe, when the mother has remained entirely separate from the company of the male.

The strength of the tiger is amazing. The fore paw is the most formidable weapon of attack. With one stroke delivered with full effect he can completely disable a large

buffalo. On one occasion, on the Koosee *dyarahs*, that is, the plains bordering the river, an enraged tiger, passing through a herd of buffaloes, broke the backs of two of the herd, giving each a stroke right and left as he went along. One blow is generally sufficient to kill the largest bullock or buffalo. Our captain, Joe, had once received *khubber*, that is, news or information, of a kill by a tiger. He went straight to the *batan*, the herd's head-quarters, and on making enquiries, was told that the tiger was a veritable monster.

"Did you see it?" asked Joe.

"I did not," responded the *gwala* or cowherd.

"Then how do you know it was so large?"

"Because," said the man, "it killed the biggest buffalo in my herd, and the poor brute only gave one groan."

George once tracked a tiger, following up the drag of a bullock that he had carried off. At one place the brute came to a ditch, which was measured and found to be five feet in width. Through this there was no drag, but the traces continued on the further side. The inference is, that the powerful thief had cleared the ditch, taking the bullock bodily with him at a bound. Others have been known to jump clear out of a cattle pen, over a fence some six feet high, taking on one occasion a large-sized calf, and another time a sheep.

Another wounded tiger, with two bullets in his flanks, the wound being near the root of the tail, cleared a *nullah*, or dry watercourse, at one bound. The nullah was stepped by George, and found to be twenty-three paces wide. It is fortunate, with such tremendous powers for attack, that the tiger will try as a rule to slink out of the way if he can. He almost always avoids an encounter with man. His first instinct is flight. Only the exciting incidents of the chase are as a rule put upon record. A narrative of tiger shooting therefore is apt in this respect to be a little misleading. The victims who meet their death tamely and quietly (and they

form the majority in every hunt)—those that are shot as they are tamely trying to escape—are simply enumerated; but the charging tiger, the old vixen that breaks the line, and scatters the beaters to right and left, that rouses the blood of the sportsmen to a fierce excitement, these are made the most of. Every incident is detailed and dwelt upon, and thus the idea has gained ground, that ALL tigers are courageous, and wait not for attack, but in most instances take the initiative. I is not the case. Most of the tigers I have seen killed would have escaped if they could. It is only when brought to bay, or very hard pressed, or in defence of its young, that a tiger or tigress displays its native ferocity. At such a moment indeed, nothing gives a better idea of savage determined fury and fiendish rage. With ears thrown back, brows contracted, mouth open, and glaring yellow eyes scintillating with fury, the cruel claws plucking at the earth, the ridgy hairs on the back stiff and erect as bristles, and the lithe lissom body quivering in every muscle and fibre with wrath and hate, the beast comes down to the charge with a defiant roar, which makes the pulse bound and the breath come short and quick. It requires all a man's nerve and coolness to enable him to make steady shooting.

Roused to fury by a wound, I have seen tigers wheel round with amazing swiftness, and dash headlong, roaring dreadfully as they charged, full upon the nearest elephant, scattering the line and lacerating the poor creature on whose flanks or head they may have fastened, their whole aspect betokening pitiless ferocity and fiendish rage.

Even in death they do not forget their savage instincts. I knew of one case in which a seemingly dead tiger inflicted a fearful wound upon an elephant that had trodden on what appeared to be his inanimate carcase. Another elephant, that attacked and all but trampled a tiger to death, was severely bitten under one of the toe-nails. The wound mortified, and the unfortunate beast died in about a week

after its infliction. Another monster, severely wounded, fell into a pool of water, and seized hold with its jaws of a hard knot of wood that was floating about. In its death agony, it made its powerful teeth meet in the hard wood, and not until it was being cut up, and we had divided the muscles of the jaws, could we extricate the wood from that formidable clench. In rage and fury, and mad with pain, the wounded tiger will often turn round and savagely bite the wound that causes its agony, and they very often bite their paws and shoulders, and tear the grass and earth around them.

A tiger wounded in the spine, however, is the most exciting spectacle. Paralysed in the limbs, he wheels round, roaring and biting at everything within his reach. In 1874 I shot one in the spine, and watched his furious movements for some time before I put him out of his misery. I threw him a pad from one of the elephants, and the way he tore and gnawed it gave me some faint idea of his fury and ferocity. He looked the very personification of impotent viciousness; the incarnation of devilish rage.

Urged by hunger the tiger fearlessly attacks his prey. The most courageous are young tigers about seven or eight feet long. They invariably give better sport than larger and older animals, being more ready to charge, and altogether bolder and more defiant. Up to the age of two years they have probably been with the mother, have never encountered a reverse or defeat, and having become bold by impunity, hesitate not to fly at any assailant whatever.

Like all the cat tribe, they are very cruel in disposition, often most wantonly so. Having disabled his prey with the first onset, the tiger plays with it as a cat does with a mouse, and unless very sharp set by hunger, he always indulges this love of torture. His attacks are by no means due only to the cravings of his appetite. He often slays the victims of a herd, in the wantonness of sport, merely to indulge his murderous propensities. Even when he has had a good meal

he will often go on adding fresh victims, seemingly to gratify his sense of power, and his love of slaughter. In teaching her cubs to kill for themselves, the mother often displays great cruelty, frequently killing at a time five or six cows from one herd. The young savages are apt pupils, and "try their prentice hand" on calves and weakly members of the herd, killing from the mere love of murder.

Their cunning is as remarkable as their cruelty; what they lack in speed they make up in consummate subtlety. They take advantage of the direction of the wind, and of every irregularity of the ground. It is amazing what slight cover will suffice to conceal their lurking forms from the observation of the herd. During the day they generally retreat to some cool and shady spot, deep in the recesses of the jungle. Where the soft earth has been worn away with ragged hollows and deep shady watercourses, where the tallest and most impenetrable jungle conceals the winding and impervious paths, hidden in the gloom and obscurity of the densely matted grass, the lordly tiger crouches, and blinks away the day. With the approach of night, however, his mood undergoes a change. He hears the tinkle of the bells, borne by some of the members of a retreating herd, that may have been feeding in close proximity to his haunt all day long, and from which he has determined to select a victim for his evening meal. He rouses himself and yawns, stretches himself like the great cruel cat he is, and then crawls and creeps silently along, by swampy watercourses, and through devious labyrinths known to himself alone. He hangs on the outskirts of the herd, prowling along and watching every motion of the returning cattle. He makes his selection, and with infinite cunning and patience contrives to separate it from the rest. He waits for a favourable moment, when, with a roar that sends the alarmed companions of the unfortunate victim scampering together to the front, he springs on his unhappy prey,

deprives it of all power of resistance with one tremendous stroke, and bears it away to feast at his leisure on the warm and quivering carcase.

He generally kills as the shades of evening are falling, and seldom ventures on a foraging expedition by day. After nightfall it is dangerous to be abroad in the jungles. It is then that dramas are acted of thrilling interest, and unimaginable sensation scenes take place. Some of the old shekarries and field-watchers frequently dig shallow pits, in which they take their stand. Their eye is on the level of the ground, and any object standing out in relief against the sky line can be readily detected. If they could relate their experiences, what absorbing narratives they could write! They see the tiger spring upon his terror-stricken prey, the mother and her hungry cubs prowling about for a victim, or two fierce tigers battling for the favours of some sleek, striped, remorseless, blood-thirsty forest-fiend. In pursuit of their quarry they steal noiselessly along, and love to make their spring unawares. They generally select some weaker member of a herd, and are chary of attacking a strong big-boned, horned animal. They sometimes "catch a Tartar," and instances are known of a buffalo not only withstanding the attack of a tiger successfully, but actually gaining the victory over his more active assailant, whose life has paid the penalty of his rashness.

Old G. told me he had come across the bodies of a wild boar and an old tiger, lying dead together near Burgamma. The boar was fearfully mauled, but the clean-cut gaping gashes in the striped hide of the tiger, told how fearfully and gallantly he had battled for his life.

In emerging from the jungle at night, they generally select the same path or spot, and approach the edge of the cover with great caution. They will follow the same track for days together. Hence in some places the tracks of the tigers are so numerous as to lead the tyro to imagine that

dozens must have passed, when in truth the tracks all belong to one and the same brute. So acute is their perception, so narrowly do they scrutinize every minute object in their path, so suspicious is their nature, that anything new in their path, such as a pitfall, a screen of cut grass, a *mychan*, that is, a stage from which you might be intending to get a shot, nay, even the print of a footstep—a man's, a horse's, an elephant's—is often quite enough to turn them from a projected expedition, or at any rate to lead them to seek some new outlet from the jungle. In any case it increases their wariness, and under such circumstances it becomes almost impossible to get a shot at them from a pit or shooting-stage. Their vision, their sense of smell, of hearing, all their perceptions are so acute, that I think lying in wait for them is chiefly productive of weariness and vexation of spirit. It is certainly dangerous, and the chances of a successful shot are so problematical, while the *désagréables* and discomforts and dangers are so real and tangible, that I am inclined to think this mode of attack "hardly worth the candle."

With all his ferocity and cruelty, however, I am of opinion that the tiger is more cowardly than courageous. He will always try to escape a danger, and fly from attack, rather than attack in return or wait to meet it, and wherever he can, in pursuit of his prey, he will trust rather to his cunning than to his strength, and he always prefers an ambuscade to an open onslaught.

CHAPTER XIX.

The tiger's mode of attack—The food he prefers—Varieties of prey——Examples—What he eats first—How to tell the kill of a tiger—Appetite fierce—Tiger choked by a bone—Two varieties of tiger—The Royal Bengal—Description—The Hill tiger—His description—The two compared—Length of the tiger—How to measure tigers—Measurements—Comparison between male and female—Number of young at a birth—The young cubs—Mother teaching cubs to kill—Education and progress of the young tiger—Wariness and cunning of the tiger—Hunting incidents showing their powers of concealment—Tigers taking to water—Examples—Swimming powers—Caught by floods—Story of the Soonderbund tigers.

THE tiger's mode of attack is very characteristic of his whole nature. To see him stealthily crouching, or crawling silently and sneakingly after a herd of cattle, dodging behind every clump of bushes or tuft of grass, running swiftly along the high bank of a watercourse, and sneaking under the shadowing border of a belt of jungle, is to understand his cunning and craftiness. His attitude, when he is crouching for the final bound, is the embodiment of suppleness and strength. All his actions are graceful, and half display and half conceal beneath their symmetry and elegance the tremendous power and deadly ferocity that lurks beneath. For a short distance he is possessed of great speed, and with a few short agile bounds he generally manages to overtake his prey. If baffled in his first attack, he retires growling to lie in wait for a less fortunate victim. His onset being so fierce and sudden, the animal he selects for his prey is generally taken at a great disadvantage, and is seldom in a position to make any strenuous or availing resistance.

Delivering the numbing blow with his mighty fore paw, he fastens on the throat of the animal he has felled, and invariably tries to tear open the jugular vein. This is his practice in nearly every case, and it shows a wonderful instinct for selecting the most deadly spot in the whole body of his luckless prey. When he has got hold of his victim by the throat, he lies down, holding on to the bleeding carcase, snarling and growling, and fastening and withdrawing his claws, much as a cat does with a rat or mouse. Some writers say he then proceeds to drink the blood, but this is just one of those broad general assertions which require proof. In some cases he may quench his thirst and gratify his appetite for blood by drinking it from the gushing veins of his quivering victim, but in many cases I know from observation that the blood is not drunk. If the tiger is very hungry he then begins his feast, tearing huge fragments of flesh from the dead body, and not unusually swallowing them whole. If he is not particularly hungry, he drags the carcase away and hides it in some well-known spot. This is to preserve it from the hungry talons and teeth of vultures and jackals. He commonly remains on guard near his *cache* until he has acquired an appetite. If he cannot conveniently carry away his quarry, because of its bulk, or the nature of the ground, or from being disturbed, he returns to the place at night and satisfies his appetite.

Tigers can sneak crouchingly along as fast as they can trot, and it is wonderful how silently they can steal on their prey. They seem to have some stray provident fits, and on occasions make provision for future wants. There are instances on record of a tiger dragging a *kill* after him for miles, over water and through slush and weeds, and feasting on the carcase days after he has killed it. It is a fact, now established beyond a doubt, that he will eat carrion and putrid flesh, but only from necessity and not from choice.

On one occasion my friends put up a tigress during the

rains, when there are few cattle in the *dyarahs* or plains near the river. She had killed a pig, and was eagerly devouring the carcase when she was disturbed. Snarling and growling, she made off with a leg of pork in her mouth, when a bullet ended her career. They seemed to prefer pork and venison to almost any other kind of food, and no doubt pig and deer are their natural and usual prey. The influx, however, of vast herds of cattle, and the consequent presence of man, drive away the wild animals, and at all events make them more wary and more difficult to kill. Finding domestic cattle unsuspicious, and not very formidable foes, the tiger contents himself at a pinch with beef, and judging from his ravages he comes to like it. Getting bolder by impunity, he ventures in some straits to attack man. He finds him a very easy prey; he finds the flesh too, perhaps, not unlike his favourite pig. Henceforth he becomes a "man-eater," the most dreaded scourge and pestilent plague of the district. He sometimes finds an old boar a tough customer, and never ventures to attack a buffalo unless it be grazing alone, and away from the rest of the herd. When buffaloes are attacked, they make common cause against their crafty and powerful foe, and uniting together in a crescent-shaped line, their horns all directed in a living *chevaux-de-frise* against the tiger, they rush tumultuously at him, and fairly hunt him from the jungle. The pig, having a short thick neck, and being tremendously muscular, is hard to kill; but the poor inoffensive cow, with her long neck, is generally killed at the first blow, or so disabled that it requires little further effort to complete the work of slaughter.

Two friends of mine once shot an enormous old tiger on a small island in the middle of the river, during the height of the annual rains. The brute had lost nearly all its hair from mange, and was an emaciated, sorry-looking object. From the remains on the island—the skin, scales, and bones—they found that he must have slain and eaten several

alligators during his enforced imprisonment on the island. They will eat alligators when pressed by hunger, and they have been known to subsist on turtles, tortoises, iguanas, and even jackals. Only the other day in Assam a son of Dr. B. was severely mauled by a tiger which sprang into the verandah after a dog. There were three gentlemen in the verandah, and, as you may imagine, they were taken not a little by surprise. They succeeded in bagging the tiger, but not until poor B. was very severely hurt.

After tearing the throat open, they walk round the prostrate carcase of their prey, growling and spitting like "tabby" cats. They begin their operations in earnest, invariably on the buttock. A leopard generally eats the inner portion of the thigh first. A wolf tears open the belly, and eats the intestines first. A vulture, hawk, or kite, begins on the eyes; but a tiger invariably begins on the buttocks, whether of buffalo, cow, deer, or pig. He then eats the fatty covering round the intestines, follows that up with the liver and udder, and works his way round systematically to the fore-quarters, leaving the head to the last. It is frequently the only part of an animal that they do not eat.

A "man-eater" eats the buttocks, shoulders, and breasts first. So many carcases are found in the jungle of animals that have died from disease or old age, or succumbed to hurts and accidents, that the whitened skeletons meet the eye in hundreds. But one can always tell the kill of a tiger, and distinguish between it and the other bleached heaps. The large bones of a tiger's kill are always broken. The broad massive rib bones are crunched in two as easily as a dog would snap the drumstick of a fowl. Vultures and jackals, the scavengers of the jungle, are incapable of doing this; and when you see the fractured large bones, you can always tell that the whiskered monarch has been on the war-path. George S. writes me:—

"I have known a tiger devour a whole bullock to his own

cheek in one day. Early in the morning a man came to inform me he had seen a tiger pull down a bullock. I went after the fellow late in the afternoon, and found him in a bush not more than twenty feet square, the only jungle he had to hide in for some distance round, and in this he had polished off the bullock, nothing remaining save the head. The jungle being so very small, and he having lain the whole day in it, nothing in the way of vultures or jackals could have assisted him in finishing off the bullock."

When hungry they appear to bolt large masses of flesh without masticating it. The same correspondent writes:—

"We cut out regular 'fids' once from a tiger's stomach, also large pieces of bone. Joe heard a tremendous roaring one night, which continued till near morning, not far from Nipunneah. He went out at dawn to look for the tiger, which he found was dead. The brute had tried to swallow the knee-joint of a bullock, and it had stuck in his gullet. This made him roar from pain, and eventually choked him."

As there are two distinct varieties of wild pig in India, so there seems to be little doubt that there are two distinct kinds of tigers. As these have frequently crossed we find many hybrids. I cannot do better than again quote from my obliging and observant friend George. The two kinds he designates as "The Royal Bengal," and "The Hill Tiger," and goes on to say:—

"As a rule the stripes of a Royal Bengal are single and dark. The skull is widely different from that of his brother the Hill tiger, being low in the crown, wider in the jaws, rather flat in comparison, and the brain-pan longer with a sloping curve at the end, the crest of the brain-pan being a concave curve.

"The Hill tiger is much more massively built; squat and thick-set, heavier in weight and larger in bulk, with shorter tail, and very large and powerful neck, head, and shoulders. The stripes generally are double, and of a more brownish

tinge, with fawn colour between the double stripes. The skull is high in the crown, and not quite so wide. The brain-pan is shorter, and the crest slightly convex or nearly straight, and the curve at the end of the skull rather abrupt.

"They never grow so long as the 'Bengal,' yet look twice as big.

"The crosses are very numerous, and vary according to pedigree, in stripes, skulls, form, weight, bulk, and tail. This I find most remarkable when I look at my collection of over 160 skulls.

"The difference is better marked in tigers than in tigresses. The Bengal variety are not as a rule as ferocious as the Hill tiger. Being more supple and cunning, they can easier evade their pursuers by flight and manœuvre than their less agile brothers. The former, owing to deficiency of strength, oftener meet with discomfiture, and consequently are more wary and cunning; while the latter, prone to carry everything before them, trust more to their strength and courage, anticipating victory as certain.

"In some the stripes are doubled throughout, in others only partially so, while in some they are single throughout, and some have manes to a slight extent."

I have no doubt this classification is correct. The tigers I have seen in Nepaul near the hills, were sometimes almost a dull red, and at a distance looked like a huge dun cow, while those I have seen in the plains during our annual hunts, were of a bright tawny yellow, longer, more lanky, and not showing half such a bold front as their bulkier and bolder brethren of the hills.

The length of the tiger has often given rise to fierce discussions among sportsmen. The fertile imagination of the slayer of a solitary "stripes," has frequently invested the brute he has himself shot, or seen shot, or perchance heard of as having been shot by a friend, or the friend of a friend, with a fabulous length, inches swelling to feet, and di-

mensions growing at each repetition of the yarn, till, as in the case of boars, the twenty-eight incher becomes a forty-inch tusker, and the eight-foot tiger stretches to twelve or fourteen feet.

Purists again, sticklers for stern truth, haters of bounce or exaggeration, have perhaps erred as much on the other side; and in their eagerness to give the exact measurement, and avoid the very appearance of exaggeration, they actually stretch their tape line and refuse to measure the curves of the body, taking it in straight lines. This I think is manifestly unfair.

Our mode of measurement in Purneah was to take the tiger as he lay before he was put on the elephant, and measure from the tip of the nose, over the crest of the skull. along the undulations of the body, to the tip of the tail. That is, we followed the curvature of the spine along the dividing ridge of the back, and always were careful and fair in our attempts. I am of opinion that a tiger over ten feet long is an exceptionally long one, but when I read of sportsmen denying altogether that even that length can be attained, I can but pity the dogmatic scepticism that refuses credence to well-ascertained and authenticated facts. I believe also that tigers are not got nearly so large as in former days. I believe that much longer and heavier tigers —animals larger in every way—were shot some twenty years ago than those we can get now, but I account for this by the fact that there is less land left waste and uncultivated, There are more roads, ferries, and bridges, more improved communications, and in consequence more travelling. Population and cultivation have increased; fire-arms are more numerous; sport is more generally followed; shooting is much more frequent and deadly; and, in a word, tigers have not the same chances as they had some twenty years ago of attaining a ripe old age, and reaching the extremest limit of their growth. The largest tigers being also the most

suspicious and wary, are only found in the remotest recesses of the impenetrable jungles of Nepaul and the Terai, or in those parts of the Indian wilds where the crack of the European rifle is seldom or never heard.

It has been so loudly asserted, and so boldly maintained that no tiger was ever shot reaching, when fairly measured (that is, measured with the skin on, as he lay), ten feet, that I will let Mr. George again speak for himself. Referring to the Royal Bengal, he says:—

"These grow to great lengths. They have been shot as long as twelve feet seven inches (my father shot one that length) or longer; twelve feet seven inches, twelve feet six inches, twelve feet three inches, twelve feet one inch, and twelve feet, have been shot and recorded in the old sporting magazines by gentlemen of undoubted veracity in Purneah.

"I have seen the skin of one twelve feet one inch, compared with which the skin of one I have by me *that measured as he lay* (the italics are mine) eleven feet one inch, looks like the skin of a cub. The old skin looks more like that of a huge antediluvian species in comparison with the other.

"The twelve-footer was so heavy that my uncle (C. A. S.) tells me no number of mahouts could lift it. Several men, if they could have approached at one and the same time, might have been able to do so, but a sufficient number of men could not lay hold simultaneously to move the body from the ground.

"Eventually a number of bamboos had to be cut and placed in an incline from the ground to the elephant's saddle while the elephant knelt down, and up this incline the tiger had to be regularly hauled and shoved, and so fastened on the elephant.

"He (the tiger) mauled four elephants, one of whom died the same day, and one other had a narrow *butch*, i.e. escape, of its life."

In another communication to me, my friend goes over the same ground, but as the matter is one of interest to sportsmen and naturalists, I will give the extract entire. It proceeds as follows:—

"Tigers grow to great lengths, some assert to even fourteen feet. I do not say they do not, but such cases are very rare, and require authentication. The longest I have seen, measured as he lay, eleven feet one inch (see 'Oriental Sporting Magazine,' for July, 1871, p. 308). He was seven feet nine inches from tip of nose to root of tail; root of tail one foot three inches in circumference; round chest four feet six inches; length of head one foot two inches; forearm two feet two inches; round the head two feet ten inches; length of tail three feet four inches.

"Besides this, I have shot another eleven feet, and one ten feet eleven inches.

"The largest tigress I have shot was at Sahareah, which measured ten feet two inches. I shot another ten feet exactly" (see O. S. M., Aug., 1874, p. 358).

"I have got the head of a tiger, shot by Joe, which measured eleven feet five inches. It was shot at Baraila.

"The male is much bigger built in every way—length, weight, size, &c., than the female. The males are more savage, the females more cunning and agile. The arms, body, paws, head, skull, claws, teeth, &c., of the female, are smaller. The tail of tigress longer; hind legs more lanky; the prints look smaller and more contracted, and the toes nearer together. It is said that though a large tiger may venture to attack a buffalo, the tigress refrains from doing so, but I have found this otherwise in my experience.

"I have kept a regular log of all tigers shot by me. The average length of fifty-two tigers recorded in my journal is nine feet six and a half inches (cubs excluded), and of sixty-eight tigresses (cubs excluded), eight feet four inches.

"The average of tigers and tigresses is eight feet ten

and a quarter inches. This is excluding cubs I have taken alive."

As to measurements, he goes on to make a few remarks, and as I cannot improve on them I reproduce the original passage:—

"Several methods have been recommended for measuring tigers. I measure them on the ground, or when brought to camp before skinning, and run the tape tight along the line, beginning at the tip of the nose, along the middle of the skull, between the ears and neck, then along the spine to the end of the tail, taking any curves of the body.

"No doubt measurements of skull, body, tail, legs, &c., ought all to be taken, to give an adequate idea of the tiger, and for comparing them with one another, but this is not always feasible."

Most of the leading sportsmen in India now-a-days are very particular in taking the dimensions of every limb of the dead tiger. They take his girth, length, and different proportions. Many even weigh the tiger when it gets into camp, and no doubt this test is one of the best that can be given for a comparison of the sizes of the different animals slain.

Another much disputed point in the natural history of the animal, a point on which there has been much acrimonious discussion, is the number of young that are given at a birth. Some writers have asserted, and stoutly maintained, that two cubs, or at the most three, is the extreme number of young brought forth at one time.

This may be the ordinary number, but the two gentlemen I have already alluded to have assured me, that on frequent occasions they have picked up four actually born, and have cut out five several times, and on one occasion six, from the womb of a tigress.

I have myself picked up four male cubs, all in one spot, with their eyes just beginning to open, and none of their teeth through the gums. One had been trampled to death by

buffaloes, the other three were alive and scatheless, huddled into a bush, like three immense kittens. I kept the three for a considerable time, and eventually took them to Calcutta and sold them for a very satisfactory price.

It seems clear, however, that the tigress frequently has four and even five cubs. It is rare, indeed, to find her accompanied by more than two well-grown cubs, very seldom three; and the inference is, that one or two of the young tigers succumb in very early life.

The young ones do not appear to grow very quickly; they are about a foot long when they are born; they are born blind, with very minute hair, almost none in fact, but with the stripes already perfectly marked on the soft supple skin; they open their eyes when they are eight or ten days old, at which time they measure about a foot and a half. At the age of nine months they have attained to five feet in length, and are waxing mischievous. Tiger cubs a year old average about five feet eight inches, tigresses some three inches or so less. In two years they grow respectively to—the male seven feet six inches, and the female seven feet. At about this time they leave the mother, if they have not already done so, and commence depredations on their own account. In fact, their education has been well attended to. The mother teaches them to kill when they are about a year old. A young cub that measured only six feet, and whose mother had been shot in one of the annual beats, was killed while attacking a full-grown cow in the Government pound at Dumdaha police station. When they reach the length of six feet six inches they can kill pretty easily, and numbers have been shot by George and other Purneah sportsmen close to their "kills."

They are most daring and courageous when they have just left their mother's care, and are cast forth to fight the battle of life for themselves. While with the old tigress their lines have been cast in not unpleasant places, they have seldom

known hunger, and have experienced no reverses. Accustomed to see every animal succumb to her well-planned and audacious attacks, they fancy that nothing will withstand their onslaught. They have been known to attack a line of elephants, and to charge most determinedly, even in this adolescent stage.

Bye-and-bye, however, as they receive a few rude shocks from buffaloes, or are worsted in a hand-to-hand encounter with some tough old bull, or savage old grey boar, more especially if they get an ugly rip or two from the sharp tusks of an infuriated fighting tusker, they begin to be less aggressive, they learn that discretion may be the better part of valour, and their cunning instincts are roused. In fact, their education is progressing, and in time they instinctively discover every wile and dodge and cunning stratagem, and display all the wondrous subtlety of their race in procuring their prey.

Old tigers are invariably more wary, cautious, and suspicious than young ones, and till they are fairly put to it by hunger, hurt, or compulsion, they endeavour to keep their stripes concealed. When brought to bay, however, there is little to reproach them with on the score of cowardice, and it will be a matter of rejoicing if you or your elephants do not come off second best in the encounter. Even in the last desperate case, a cunning old tiger will often make a feint, or sham rush, or pretended charge, when his whole object is flight. If he succeed in demoralising the line of elephants, roaring and dashing furiously about, he will then try in the confusion to double through, unless he is too badly wounded to be able to travel fast, in which case he will fight to the end.

Old fellows are well acquainted with every maze and thicket in the jungles, and they no sooner hear the elephants enter the "bush" or "cover" than they make off for some distant shelter. If there is no apparent chance of this being

successful, they try to steal out laterally and outflank the line, or if that also is impossible, they hide in some secret recess like a fox, or crouch low in some clumpy bush, and trust to you or your elephant passing by without noticing their presence.

It is marvellous in what sparse cover they will manage to lie up. So admirably do their stripes mingle with the withered and charred grass-stems and dried-up stalks, that it is very difficult to detect the dreaded robber when he is lying flat, extended close to the ground, so still and motionless that you cannot distinguish a tremor or even a vibration of the grass in which he is crouching.

On one occasion George followed an old tiger through some stubble about three feet high. It had been well trampled down too by tame buffaloes. The tiger had been tracked into the field, and was known to be in it. George was within ten yards of the cunning brute, and although mounted on a tall elephant, and eagerly scanning the thin cover with his sharpest glance, he could not discern the concealed monster. His elephant was within four paces of it, when it sprang up at the charge, giving a mighty roar, which however also served as its death yell, as a bullet from George's trusty gun crashed through its ribs and heart.

Tigers can lay themselves so flat on the ground, and lie so perfectly motionless, that it is often a very easy thing to overlook them. On another occasion, when the Purneah Hunt were out, a tigress that had been shot got under some cover that was trampled down by a line of about twenty elephants. The sportsmen knew that she had been severely wounded, as they could tell by the gouts of blood, but there was no sign of the body. She had disappeared. After a long search, beating the same ground over and over again, an elephant trod on the dead body lying under the trampled canes, and the mahout got down and discovered her lying quite dead. She was a large animal and full grown.

On another occasion George was after a fine male tiger. He was following up fast, but coming to a broad nullah, full of water, he suddenly lost sight of his game. He looked up and down the bank, and on the opposite bank, but could see no traces of the tiger. Looking down, he saw in the water what at first he took to be a large bull-frog. There was not a ripple on the placid stagnant surface of the pool. He marvelled much, and just then his mahout pointed to the supposed bull-frog, and in an excited whisper implored George to fire. A keener look convinced George that it really was the tiger. It was totally immersed all but the face, and lying so still that not the faintest motion or ripple was perceptible. He fired and inflicted a terrible wound. The tiger bounded madly forward, and George gave it its quietus through the spine as it tried to spring up the opposite bank.

A nearly similar case occurred to old Mr. C., one of the veteran sportsmen of Purneah. A tiger had bolted towards a small tank or pond, and although the line followed up in hot pursuit, the brute disappeared. Old C., keener than the others, was loth to give up the pursuit, and presently discerned a yellowish reflection in the clear water. Peering more intently, he could discover the yellowish tawny outline of the cunning animal, totally immersed in the water, save its eyes, ears, and nose. He shot the tiger dead, and it sank to the bottom like a stone. So perfectly had it concealed itself, that the other sportsmen could not for the life of them imagine what old C. had fired at, till his mahout got down and began to haul the dead animal out of the water.

Tigers are not at all afraid of water, and are fast and powerful swimmers. They swim much after the fashion of a horse, only the head out of the water, and they make scarcely any ripple.

"In another case," writes George, "though not five yards from the elephant, and right under me, a tiger was swimming

with so slight a ripple that I mistook it for a rat, until I saw the stripes emerge, when I perforated his jacket with a bullet."

Only their head remaining out of water when they are swimming, they are very hard to hit, as shooting at an object on water is very deceptive work as to judging distance, and a tiger's head is but a small object to aim at when some little way off.

Old C. had another adventure with a cunning rogue, which all but ended disastrously. He was in hot pursuit of the tiger, and, finding no safety on land, it took to swimming in a broad unfordable piece of water, a sort of deep lagoon. Old C. procured a boat that was handy, and got a coolie to paddle him out after the tiger. He fired several shots at the exposed head of the brute, but missed. He thought he would wait till he got nearer and make a sure shot, as he had only one bullet left in the boat. Suddenly the tiger turned round and made straight for the boat. Here was a quandary. Even if he killed the tiger with his single bullet it might upset the boat; the lagoon was full of alligators, to say nothing of weeds, and there was no time to get his heavy boots off. He felt his life might depend on the accuracy of his aim. He fired, and killed the tiger stone dead within four or five yards of the boat.

On one occasion, when out with our worthy district magistrate, Mr. S., I came on the tracks of what to all appearance was a very large tiger. They led over the sand close to the water's edge, and were very distinct. I could see no returning marks, so I judged that the tiger must have taken to the water. The stream was rapid and deep, and midway to the further bank was a big, oblong-shaped, sandy islet, some five or six hundred yards long, and having a few scrubby bushes growing sparsely on it. We put our elephants into the rapid current, and got across. The river here was nearly a quarter of a mile wide on each side of the islet. As we

emerged from the stream on to the island we found fresh tracks of the tiger. They led us completely round the circumference of the islet. The tiger had evidently been in quest of food. The prints were fresh and very well defined. Finding that all was barren on the sandy shore, he entered the current again, and following up we found his imprint once more on the further bank, several hundred yards down the stream.

One tiger was killed stone dead by a single bullet during one of our annual hunts, and falling back into the water, it sank to the bottom like lead. Being unable to find the animal, we beat all round the place, till I suggested it might have been hit and fallen into the river. One of the men was ordered to dive down, and ascertain if the tiger was at the bottom. The river water is generally muddy, so that the bottom cannot be seen. Divesting himself of puggree, and girding up his loins, the diver sank gently to the bottom, but presently reappeared in a palpable funk, puffing and blowing, and declaring that the tiger was certainly at the bottom. The foolish fellow thought it might be still alive. We soon disabused his mind of that idea, and had the dead tiger hauled up to dry land.

Surprised by floods, a tiger has been known to remain for days on an ant-hill, and even to take refuge on the branch of some large tree, but he takes to water readily, and can swim for over a mile, and he has been known to remain for days in from two to three feet depth of water.

A time-honoured tiger story with old hands, used to tell how the Soonderbund tigers got carried out to sea. If the listener was a new arrival, or a *gobe mouche*, they would explain that the tigers in the Soonderbunds often get carried out to sea by the retiring tide. It would sweep them off as they were swimming from island to island in the vast delta of Father Ganges. Only the young ones, however, suffered this lamentable fate. The older and more wary fellows,

taught perhaps by sad experience, used always to dip their tails in, before starting on a swim, so as to ascertain which way the tide was flowing. If it was the flow of the tide they would boldly venture in, but if it was ebb tide, and there was the slightest chance of their being carried out to sea, they would patiently lie down, meditate on the fleeting vanity of life, and like the hero of the song—

"Wait for the turn of the tide."

Without venturing an opinion on this story, I may confidently assert, that the tiger, unlike his humble prototype the domestic cat, is not really afraid of water, but will take to it readily to escape a threatened danger, or if he can achieve any object by "paddling his own canoe."

CHAPTER XX.

No regular breeding season—Beliefs and prejudices of the natives about tigers—Bravery of the "gwalla," or cowherd caste—Clawmarks on trees—Fondness for particular localities—Tiger in Mr. F.'s howdah—Springing powers of tigers—Lying close in cover—Incident—Tiger shot with No. 4 shot—Man clawed by a tiger—Knocked its eye out with a sickle—Same tiger subsequently shot in same place—Tigers easily killed—Instances—Effect of shells on tiger and buffalo—Best weapon and bullets for tiger—Poisoning tigers denounced—Natives prone to exaggerate in giving news of tiger—Anecdote—Beating for tiger—Line of elephants—Padding dead game—Line of seventy-six elephants—Captain of the hunt—Flags for signals in the line—"Naka," or scout ahead—Usual time for tiger shooting on the Koosee—Firing the jungle—The line of fire at night—Foolish to shoot at moving jungle—Never shoot down the line—Motions of different animals in the grass.

TIGERS seem to have no regular breeding season. As a rule the male and female come together in the autumn and winter, and the young ones are born in the spring and summer. All the young tigers I have ever heard of have been found in March, April, and May, and so on through the rains.

The natives have many singular beliefs and prejudices about tigers, and they are very often averse to give the slightest information as to their whereabouts. To a stranger they will either give no information at all, pleading entire ignorance, or they will wilfully mislead him, putting him on a totally wrong track. If you are well known to the villagers, and if they have confidence in your nerve and aim, they will eagerly tell you everything they know, and will accompany you on your elephant, to point out the exact spot where the tiger was last seen. In the event of a "find" they always look for *backsheesh*, even though your exertions may have rid their neighbourhood of an acknowledged scourge.

The *gwalla*, or cowherd caste, seem to know the habits of the yellow striped robber very accurately. Accompanied by their herd they will venture into the thickest jungle, even though they know that it is infested by one or more tigers. If any member of the herd is attacked, it is quite common for the *gwalla* to rush up, and by shouts and even blows try to make the robber yield up his prey. This is no exaggeration, but a simple fact. A cowherd attacked by a tiger has been known to call up his herd by cries, and they have succeeded in driving off his fierce assailant. No tiger will willingly face a herd of buffaloes or cattle united for mutual defence. Surrounded by his trusty herd, the *gwalla* traverses the densest jungle and most tiger-infested thickets without fear.

They believe that to rub the fat of the tiger on the loins, and to eat a piece of the tongue or flesh, will cure impotency; and tiger fat, rubbed on a painful part of the body, is an accepted specific for rheumatic affections. It is a firmly settled belief, that the whiskers and teeth, worn on the body, will act as a charm, making the wearer proof against the attacks of tigers. The collar-bone, too, is eagerly coveted for the same reason.

During the rains tigers are sometimes forced, like others of the cat tribe, to take to trees. A Mr. McI. shot two large full-grown tigers in a tree at Gunghara, and a Baboo of my acquaintance bagged no less than eight in trees during one rainy season at Rampoor.

Tigers generally prefer remaining near water, and drink a good deal, the quantity of raw meat they devour being no doubt provocative of thirst.

The marks of their claws are often seen on trees in the vicinity of their haunts, and from this fact many ridiculous stories have got abroad regarding their habits. It has even been regarded by some writers as a sort of rude test, by which to arrive at an approximate estimate of the tiger's size. A

tiger can stretch himself out some two or two and a half feet more than his measurable length. You have doubtless often seen a domestic cat whetting its claws on the mat, or scratching some rough substance, such as the bark of a tree; this is often done to clean the claws, and to get rid of chipped and ragged pieces, and it is sometimes mere playfulness. It is the same with the tiger, the scratching on the trees is frequently done in the mere wantonness of sport, but it is often resorted to to clear the claws from pieces of flesh that may have adhered to them during a meal on some poor slaughtered bullock. These marks on the trees are a valuable sign for the hunter, as by their appearance, whether fresh or old, he can often tell the whereabouts of his quarry, and a good tracker will even be able to make a rough guess at its probable size and disposition.

Like policemen, tigers stick to certain beats; even when disturbed, and forced to abandon a favourite spot, they frequently return to it; and although the jungle may be wholly destroyed, old tigers retain a partiality for the scenes of their youthful depredations; they are often shot in the most unlikely places, where there is little or no cover, and one would certainly never expect to find them; they migrate with the herds, and retire to the hills during the annual floods, always coming back to the same jungle when the rains are over.

Experienced shekarries know this trait of the tiger's character well, and can tell you minutely the colour and general appearance of the animals in any particular jungle; they are aware of any peculiarity, such as lameness, scars, &c., and their observations must be very keen indeed, and amazingly accurate, as I have never known them wrong when they committed themselves to a positive statement.

An old planter residing at Sultanpore, close on the Nepaul border, a noted sportsman and a crack shot, was charged on one occasion by a large tiger; the brute sprang right off the

ground on to the elephant's head; his hind legs were completely off the ground, resting on the elephant's chest and neck; Mr. F. retained sufficient presence of mind to sit close down in his howdah; the tiger's forearm was extended completely over the front bar, and so close that it touched his hat. In this position he called out to his son, who was on another elephant close by, to fire at the tiger; he was cool enough to warn him to take a careful aim, and not hit the elephant. His son acted gallantly up to his instructions, and shot the tiger through the heart, when it dropped down quite dead, to Mr. F.'s great relief.

Some sportsmen are of opinion, that the tiger when charging never springs clear from the ground, but only rears itself on its hind legs; this however is a mistake. I saw a tiger leap right off the ground, and spring on to the rump of an elephant carrying young Sam S. The elephant proved staunch, and remained quite quiet, and Sam, turning round in his howdah, shot his assailant through the head.

I may give another incident, to show how closely tigers will sometimes stick to cover; they are sometimes as bad to dislodge as a quail or a hare; they will crouch down and conceal themselves till you almost trample on them. One day a party of the Purneah Club were out; they had shot two fine tigers out of several that had been seen; the others were known to have gone ahead into some jungle surrounded by water, and easy to beat. Before proceeding further it was proposed accordingly to have some refreshment. The *tiffin* elephant was directed to a tree close by, beneath whose shade the hungry sportsmen were to plant themselves; the elephant had knelt down, one or two boxes had actually been removed, several of the servants were clearing away the dried grass and leaves. H. W. S. came up on the opposite side of the tree, and was in the act of leaping off his elephant, when an enormous tiger got up at his very feet, and before the astounded sportsmen could handle a gun, the

formidable intruder had cleared the bushes with a bound, and disappeared in the thick jungle.

The following adventure bears me out in my remark, that tigers get attached to, and like to remain in, one place. Mr. F. Simpson, a thorough-going sportsman of the good old type, had been out one day in the Koosee dyaras; he had had a long and unsuccessful beat for a tiger, and had given up all hope of bagging one that day; he thought therefore that he might as well turn his attention to more ignoble game. Extracting his bullets, he replaced them with No. 4 shot. In a few minutes a peacock got up in front of him, and he fired. The report roused a very fine tiger right in front of his elephant; to make the best of a bad bargain, he gave the retreating animal the full benefit of his remaining charge of shot, and peppered it well. About a year after, close to this very place, C. A. S. bagged a fine tiger. On examination, the marks of a charge of shot were found in the flanks, and on removing the pads of the feet, numbers of pellets of No. 4 shot were found embedded in them. It was evidently the animal that had been peppered a year before, and the pellets had worked their way downwards to the feet.

On another occasion, a man came to the factory where George was then residing, to give information of a tiger. He bore on his back numerous bleeding scratches, ample evidence of the truth of his story. While cutting grass in the jungle, with a blanket on his back, the day being rainy, he had been attacked by a tiger from the rear. The blanket is generally folded several times, and worn over the head and back. It is a thick heavy covering, and in the first onset the tiger tore the blanket from the man's body, which was probably the means of saving his life. The man turned round, terribly scared, as may be imagined. In desperation he struck at the tiger with his sickle, and according to his own account, he succeeded in putting out one of its eyes. He said it was a young tiger, and his bleeding wounds, and

the persistency with which he stuck to his story, impressed George with the belief that he was telling the truth. A search for the tiger was made. The man's blanket was found, torn to shreds, but no tiger, although the footprints of one were plainly visible. But some months after, near the same spot, George shot a half-grown tiger with one of its eyes gone, which had evidently been roughly torn from the socket. This was doubtless the identical brute that had attacked the grass-cutter.

It is sometimes wonderful how easily a large and powerful tiger may be killed. The most vulnerable parts are the back of the head, through the neck, and broadside on the chest. The neck is the most deadly spot of all, and a shot behind the shoulder, or on the spine, is sure to bring the game to bag. I have seen several shot with a single bullet from a smooth-bore, and on one occasion, George tells me he saw a tigress killed with a single smooth-bore bullet at over a hundred yards. The bullet was a *ricochet*, and struck the tigress below the chest, and travelled towards the heart, but without touching it. She fell twenty yards from where she had been hit. Another, which on skinning we found had been shot through the heart, with a single smooth-bore bullet at a distance of one hundred and fifty yards, travelled for thirty yards before falling dead. Meiselbach, a neighbour of mine, shot three tigers successively, on one occasion, with a No. 18 Joe Manton smooth-bore. Each of the three was killed by a single bullet, one in the head, one in the neck, and one through the heart, the bullet entering behind the shoulder.

On the other hand, I once fired no less than six Jacob's shells into a tiger, all behind the shoulder, before I could stop him. The shells seemed to explode on the surface the moment they came in contact with the body. There was a tremendous surface wound, big enough to put a pumpkin into, but very little internal hurt. On another occasion

(April 4, 1874), during one of the most exciting and most glorious moments of my sporting life—buffaloes charging the line in all directions, burning jungle all around us, and bullets whistling on every side—I fired TWELVE shells into a large bull before I killed him. As every shell hit him, I heard the sharp detonation, and saw the tiny puff of smoke curl outward from the ghastly wound. The poor maddened brute would drop on his knees, stagger again to his feet, and, game to the last, attempt to charge my elephant. I was anxious really to test the effect of the Jacob's shell as against the solid conical bullet, and carefully watched the result of each shot. My weapon was a beautifully finished No. 12 smooth-bore, made expressly to order for an officer in the Royal Artillery, from whom I bought it. From that day I never fired another Jacob's shell.

My remarks about the tiger springing clear off the ground when charging, are amply borne out by the experience of some of my sporting friends. I could quote pages, but will content myself with one extract. It is a point of some importance, as many good old sportsmen pooh-pooh the idea, and maintain that the tiger merely stretches himself out to his fullest length, and if he does leave the ground, it is by a purely physical effort, pulling himself up by his claws.

My friend George writes me: "In several cases I have known and seen the tiger spring, and leave the ground. In one case the tiger sprang from fully five yards off. He crouched at the distance of a few paces, as if about to spring, and then sprang clean on to the head of Joe's *tusker*. An eight-feet-nine-inch tigress once got on the head of my elephant, which was ten feet seven inches in height. Every one present saw her leave the ground. Once, when after a tiger in small stubble, about six feet high, I saw one bound over a bush so clean that I could see every bit of him." And so on.

For long-range shooting the rifle is doubtless the best

weapon. The Express is the most deadly. The smooth-bore is the gun for downright honest sport. Shells and hollow-pointed bullets are the things, as one sportsman writes me, "for mutilation and cowardly murder, and for spoiling the skin." Poison is the resource of the poacher. No sportsman could descend so low. Grant that the tiger is a scourge, a pest, a nuisance, a cruel and implacable foe to man and beast; pile all the vilest epithets of your vocabulary on his head, and say that he deserves them all, still he is what opportunity and circumstance have made him. He is as nature fashioned him; and there are bold spirits, and keen sights, and steady nerves enough, God wot, among our Indian sportsmen, to cope with him on more equal and sportsman-like terms than by poisoning him like a mangy dog. On this point, however, opinions differ. I do not envy the man who would prefer poisoning a tiger to the keen delight of patiently following him up, ousting him from cover to cover, watching his careful endeavours to elude your search; perhaps at the end of a long and fascinating beat, feeling the electric excitement thrill every nerve and fibre of your body, as the magnificent robber comes bounding down at the charge, the very embodiment of ferocity and strength, the perfection of symmetry, the acme of agility and grace.

Natives are such notorious perverters of the truth, and so often hide what little there may be in their communications under such floods of Oriental hyperbole and exaggeration, that you are often disappointed in going out on what you consider trustworthy and certain information. They often remind me of the story of the Laird of Logan. He was riding slowly along a country road one day, when another equestrian joined him. Logan's eye fixed itself on a hole in the turf bank bounding the road, and with great gravity, and in trust-inspiring accents, he said, "I saw a *tod* (or fox) gang in there."

"Did you, really?" cried the new comer.

"I did," responded the laird.

"Will you hold my horse till I get a spade?" cried the now excited traveller.

The laird assented. Away hurried the man, and soon returned with a spade. He set manfully to work to dig out the fox, and worked till the perspiration streamed down his face. The laird sat stolidly looking on, saying never a word; and as he seemed to be nearing the confines of the hole, the poor digger redoubled his exertions. When at length it became plain that there was no fox there, he wiped his streaming brow, and rather crossly exclaimed, "I'm afraid there's no tod here."

"It would be a wonder if there was," rejoined the laird, without the movement of a muscle, "it's ten years since I saw him gang in there."

So it is sometimes with a native. He will fire your ardour, by telling you of some enormous tiger, to be found in some jungle close by, but when you come to inquire minutely into his story, you find that the tiger was seen perhaps the year before last, or that it *used* to be there, or that somebody else had told him of its being there.

Some tigers, too, are so cunning and wary, that they will make off long before the elephants have come near. I have seen others rise on their hind legs just like a hare or a kangaroo, and peer over the jungle trying to make out one's whereabouts. This is of course only in short light jungle.

The plan we generally adopt in beating for tiger on or near the Nepaul border, is to use a line of elephants to beat the cover. It is a fine sight to watch the long line of stately monsters moving slowly and steadily forward. Several howdahs tower high above the line, the polished barrels of guns and rifles glittering in the fierce rays of the burning and vertical sun. Some of the shooters wear huge hats made from the light pith of the solah plant, others have long blue or white puggrees wound round their heads, in truly Oriental

style. These are very comfortable to wear, but rather trying to the sight, as they afford no protection to the eyes. For riding they are to my mind the most comfortable head-dress that can be worn, and they are certainly more graceful than the stiff unsightly solah hat.

Between every two howdahs are four or five pad elephants. These beat up all the intervening bushes, and carry the game that may be shot. When a pig, deer, tiger, or other animal has been shot, and has received its *coup de grace*, it is quickly bundled on to the pad, and there secured. The elephant kneels down to receive the load, and while game is being padded the whole line waits, till the operation is complete, as it is bad policy to leave blanks. Where this simple precaution is neglected, many a tiger will sneak through the opening left by the pad elephant, and so silently and cautiously can they steal through the dense cover, and so cunning are they and acute, that they will take advantage of the slightest gap, and the keenest and best trained eye will fail to detect them.

In most of our hunting parties on the Koosee, we had some twenty or thirty elephants, and frequently six or eight howdahs. These expeditions were very pleasant, and we lived luxuriously. For real sport ten elephants and two or three tried comrades—not more—is much better. With a short, easily worked line, that can turn and double, and follow the tiger quickly, and dog his every movement, you can get far better sport, and bring more to bag, than with a long unwieldy line, that takes a considerable time to turn and wheel, and in whose onward march there is of necessity little of the silence and swiftness which are necessary elements in successful tiger shooting.

I have been out with a line of seventy-six elephants and fourteen howdahs. This was on 16th March 1875. It was a magnificent sight to see the seventy-six huge brutes in the river together, splashing the water along their heated sides

to cool themselves, and sending huge waves dashing against the crumbling banks of the rapid stream. It was no less magnificent to see their slow stately march through the swaying, crashing jungle. What an idea of irresistible power and ponderous strength the huge creatures gave us, as they heaved through the tangled brake, crushing everything in their resistless progress. It was a sight to be remembered, but, as might have been expected, we found the jungles almost untenanted. Everything cleared out before us, long ere the line could reach its vicinity. We only killed one tiger, but next day we separated, the main body crossing the stream, while my friends and myself, with only fourteen elephants, rebeat the same jungle and bagged two.

In every hunt, one member is told off to look after the forage and grain for the elephants. One attends to the cooking and requirements of the table, one acts as paymaster and keeper of accounts, while the most experienced is unanimously elected captain, and takes general direction of every movement of the line. He decides on the plan of operations for the day, gives each his place in the line, and for the time, becomes an irresponsible autocrat, whose word is law, and against whose decision there is no appeal.

Scouts are sent out during the night, and bring in reports from all parts of the jungle in the early morning, while we are discussing *chota haziree*, our early morning meal. If tiger is reported, or a kill has been discovered, we form line in silence, and without noise bear down direct on the spot. In the captain's howdah are three flags. A blue flag flying means that only tiger or rhinoceros are to be shot at. A red flag signifies that we are to have general firing, in fact that we may blaze away at any game that may be afoot, and the white flag shows us that we are on our homeward way, and then also may shoot at anything we can get, break the line, or do whatever we choose. On the flanks are generally

posted the best shots of the party. The captain, as a rule, keeps to the centre of the line. Frequently one man and elephant is sent on ahead to some opening or dry water-bed, to see that no cunning tiger sneaks away unseen. This vedette is called *naka*. All experienced sportsmen employ a naka, and not unfrequently where the ground is difficult, two are sent ahead. The naka is a most important post, and the holder will often get a lucky shot at some wary veteran trying to sneak off, and may perhaps bag the only tiger of the day. The mere knowledge that there is an elephant on ahead, will often keep tigers from trying to get away. They prefer to face the known danger of the line behind, to the unknown danger in front, and in all cases where there is a big party a naka should be sent on ahead.

Tigers can be, and are, shot on the Koosee plains all the year round, but the big hunts take place in the months of March, April, and May, when the hot west winds are blowing, and when the jungle has got considerably trampled down by the herds of cattle grazing in the tangled wilderness of tall grass. Innumerable small paths show where the cattle wander backward and forward through the labyrinths of the jungle. In the howdah we carry ample supplies of vesuvians. We light and drop these as they blaze into the dried grass and withered leaves as we move along, and soon a mighty wall of roaring flame behind us attests the presence of the destroying element. We go diagonally up wind, and the flames and smoke thus surge and roar and curl and roll, in dense blinding volumes, to the rear and leeward of our line. The roaring of the flames sounds like the maddened surf of an angry sea, dashing in thunder against an iron-bound coast. The leaping flames mount up in fiery columns, illuminating the fleecy clouds of smoke with an unearthly glare. The noise is deafening; at times some of the elephants get quite nervous at the fierce roar of the flames behind, and try to bolt across country. The fire serves two good purposes.

It burns up the old withered grass, making room for the fresh succulent sprouts to spring, and it keeps all the game in front of the line, driving the animals before us, as they are afraid to break back and face the roaring wall of flame. A seething, surging sea of flame, several miles long, encircling the whole country in its fiery belt, sweeping along at night with the roar of a storm-tossed sea; the flames flickering, swelling, and leaping up in the dark night, the fiery particles rushing along amid clouds of lurid smoke, and the glare of the serpent-like line reddening the horizon, is one of those magnificent spectacles that can only be witnessed at rare intervals among the experiences of a sojourn in India. Words fail to depict its grandeur, and the utmost skill of Doré could not render on canvas, the weird, unearthly magnificence of a jungle fire, at the culmination of its force and fury.

In beating, the elephants are several yards apart, and, standing in the howdah, you can see the slightest motion of the grass before you, unless indeed it be virgin jungle, quite untrodden, and perhaps higher than your elephant; in such high dense cover, tigers will sometimes lie up and allow you to go clean past them. In such a case you must fire the jungle, and allow the blaze to beat for you. It is common for young, over-eager sportsmen, to fire at moving jungle, trusting to a lucky chance for hitting the moving animal; this is useless waste of powder; they fail to realise the great length of the swaying grass, and invariably shoot over the game; the animal hears the crashing of the bullet through the dense thicket overhead, and immediately stops, and you lose all idea of his whereabouts. When you see an animal moving before you in long jungle, it should be your object to follow him slowly and patiently, till you can get a sight of him, and see what sort of beast he is. Firing at the moving grass is worse than useless. Keep as close behind him as you can, make signs for the other elephants to close

in; stick to your quarry, never lose sight of him for an instant, be ready to seize the first moment, when more open jungle, or some other favourable chance, may give you a glimpse of his skin.

Another caution should be observed. Never fire down the line. It is astonishing how little will divert a bullet, and a careless shot is worse than a dozen charging tigers. If a tiger does break back, let him get well away behind the line, and then blaze at him as hard as you like. It is particularly unpleasant to hear a bullet come singing and booming down the line, from some excited dunderhead on the far left or right.

A tiger slouching along in front moves pretty fast, in a silent swinging trot; the tops of the reeds or grass sway very gently, with a wavering, side to side motion. A pig rushes boldly through, and a deer will cause the grass to rock violently to and fro. A buffalo or rhinoceros is known at once by the crashing of the dry stalks, as his huge frame plunges along; but the tiger can never be mistaken. When that gentle, undulating, noiseless motion is once seen, be ready with your trusty gun, and remove not your eye from the spot, for the mighty robber of the jungle is before you.

CHAPTER XXI.

Howdahs and howdah-ropes—Mussulman custom—Killing animals for food—Mysterious appearance of natives when an animal is killed—Fastening dead tigers to the pad—Present mode wants improving—Incident illustrative of this—Dangerous to go close to wounded tigers—Examples—Footprints of tigers—Call of the tiger—Natives and their powers of description—How to beat successfully for tiger—Description of a beat—Disputes among the shooters—Awarding tigers—Cutting open the tiger—Native idea about the liver of the tiger—Signs of a tiger's presence in the jungle—Vultures—Do they scent their quarry or view it?—A vulture carrion feast.

THE best howdahs are light, single-seated ones, with strong, light frames of wood and cane-work, and a movable seat with a leather strap, adjustable to any length, on which to lean back. They should have a strong iron rail all round the top, covered with leather, with convenient grooves to receive the barrels of the guns as they rest in front, ready to either hand. In front there should be compartments for different kinds of cartridges; and pockets and lockers under the seat, and at the back, or wherever there is room. Outside should be a strong iron step, to get out and in by easily, and a strong iron ring, through which to pass the rope that binds the howdah to the elephant.

You cannot be too careful with your howdah ropes. A chain is generally used as an auxiliary to the rope, which should be of cotton, strong and well twisted, and should be overhauled daily, to see that there is no chafing. It is passed round the foot-bars of the howdah, and several times round the belly of the elephant. Another rope acts as a crupper behind, being passed through rings in the terminal frame-work of the howdah, and under the elephant's tail; it

frequently causes painful sores there, and some drivers give it a hitch round the tail, in the same way as you would hitch it round a post. Another steadying rope goes round the elephant's breast, like a chest-band. "A merciful man is merciful to his beast." You should always, therefore, have a sheet of soft well-oiled leather to go between the chest and belly ropes and the elephant's hide; this prevents chafing, and is a great relief to the poor old *hathi*, as they call the elephant. *Hatnee* is the female elephant. *Duntar* is a fellow with large tusks, and *mukna* is an elephant with small downward growing tusks.

Many of the old-fashioned howdahs are far too heavy; a firm, strong howdah should not weigh more than 28 lbs. In most of the old-fashioned ones there is a seat for an attendant. If your attendant be a Mussulman, he hurries down as soon as you shoot a deer, to cut its throat. The Mohammedan religion enjoins a variety of rules on its professors in regard to the slaying of animals for food. Chief of these is a prohibition against eating the flesh of an animal that has died a natural death; the throat of every animal intended to be eaten should be cut, and at the moment of applying the knife, *Bismillah* should be said, that is, "In the name of God." If therefore your mahout, or attendant, belong to the religion of the *Koran*, he will hurry down to cut the throat of a wounded deer if possible before life is extinct; if it be already dead, he will leave it alone for the Hindoos, who have no such scruples.

A number of *moosahurs*, *banturs*, *gwallas*, and other idlers, from the jungle villages, generally follow in the wake of the line. If you shoot many pigs, they carry off the dead bodies, and hold high carnival in their homes in the evening. To see them rush on a slain buffalo, and hack it to pieces, is a curious sight; they fight for pieces of flesh like so many vultures. Sportsmen generally content themselves with the head of a buffalo, but not a scrap of the carcase is ever

wasted. The natives are attracted to the spot, like ants to a heap of grain, or wasps to an old sugar barrel; they seem to spring out of the earth, so rapidly do they make their appearance. If you were to kill a dozen buffaloes, I believe all the flesh would be taken away to the neighbouring villages within an hour.

This appearance of men in the jungles is wonderful. You may think yourself in the centre of a vast wilderness, not a sign of human habitation for miles around; on all sides stretches a vast ocean of grass, the resort of ferocious wild animals, seemingly untrodden by a human foot. You shoot a deer, a pig, or other animal whose flesh is fit for food; the man behind you gives a cry, and in ten minutes you will have a group of brawny young fellows around your elephant, eager to carry away the game. The way these natives thread the dense jungle is to me a wonder; they seem to know every devious path and hidden recess, and they traverse the most gloomy and dangerous solitudes without betraying the slightest apprehension.

In fastening dead game to the pad of the carrying elephant, great care is necessary. Some elephants are very timid, and indeed all elephants are mistrustful and suspicious of anything behind them. They are pretty courageous in facing anything before them, but they do not like a rustling or indeed any motion in their rear. I have seen a dog put an elephant to flight, and if you have a lazy *hathi*, a good plan is to walk a horse behind him. He will then shuffle along at a prodigious pace, constantly looking round from side to side, and no doubt in his heart anathematising the horse that forces the running so persistently.

The present method of roughly lashing on dead game anyhow requires altering. Some ingenious sportsman could surely devise a system of slings by which the dead weight of the game could be more equally distributed. At present the dead bodies are hauled up at random, and fastened anyhow.

The pad gets displaced, the elephant must stop till the burden is rearranged; the ropes, especially on a hot day, cut into the skin and rub off the hair, and many a good skin is quite spoiled by the present rough method of tying on the pad.

One day, in taking off a dead tiger from the pad, near George's bungalow, the end of the rope (a new one) remained somehow fixed to the neck of the elephant. When he rose up, being relieved of the weight, he dragged the dead tiger with him. This put the elephant into a horrible funk, and despite all the efforts of the driver he started off at a trot, hauling the tiger after him. Every now and then he would turn round, and tread and kick the lifeless carcase. At length the rope gave way, and the elephant became more manageable, but not before a fine skin had been totally ruined, all owing to this primitive style of fastening by ropes to the pad. A proper pad, with leather straps and buckles, that could be hauled as tight as necessary—a sort of harness arrangement—could easily be devised, to secure dead game on the pad. I am certain it would save time in the hunting-field, and protect many a fine skin, that gets abraded and marked by the present rough and ready lashing.

It is always dangerous to go too close up to a wounded tiger, and one should never rashly jump to the conclusion that a tiger is dead because he appears so. Approach him cautiously, and make very certain that he is really and truly dead, before you venture to get down beside the body. It is a bad plan to take your elephant close up to a dead tiger at all. I have known cases, where good staunch elephants have been spoiled for future sport, by being rashly taken up to a wounded tiger. In rolling about, the tiger may get hold of the elephants, and inflict injuries that will demoralise them, and make them quite unsteady on subsequent occasions.

I have known cases where a tiger left for dead has had to be shot over again. I have seen a man get down to pull a seemingly dead tiger into the open, and get charged.

Fortunately it was a dying effort, and I put a bullet through the skull before the tiger could reach the frightened peon. We have been several times grouped round a dying tiger, watching him breathe his last, when the brute has summoned up strength for a final effort, and charged the elephants.

On one occasion W. D. had got down beside what he thought a dead tiger, had rolled him over, and, tape in hand, was about to measure the animal, when he staggered to his feet with a terrific growl, and made away through the jungle. He had only been stunned, and fortunately preferred running to fighting, or the consequences might have been more tragic; as it was, he was quickly followed up and killed. But instances like these might be indefinitely multiplied, all teaching, that seemingly dead tigers should be approached with the utmost respect. Never venture off your elephant without a loaded revolver.

In beating for tiger, we have seen that the appearance of the kill, whether fresh or old, whether much torn and mangled or comparatively untouched, often affords valuable indications to the sportsman. The footprints are not less narrowly looked for, and scrutinised. If we are after tiger, and following them up, the captain will generally get down at any bare place, such as a dry nullah, the edge of a tank or water hole, or any other spot where footprints can be detected. Fresh prints can be very easily distinguished. The impression is like that made by a dog, only much larger, and the marks of the claws are not visible. The largest footprint I have heard of was measured by George S., and was found to be eight and a quarter inches wide from the outside of the first to the outside of the fourth toe. If a tiger has passed very recently, the prints will be fresh-looking, and if on damp ground there can be no mistaking them. If it has been raining recently, we particularly notice whether the rain has obliterated the track at all, in any place; which would lead us to the conclusion that the tiger had passed before it

rained. If the water has lodged in the footprint, the tiger has passed after the shower. In fresh prints the water will be slightly puddly or muddy. In old prints it will be quite clear; and so on.

The call of the male tiger is quite different from that of the female. The male calls with a hoarse harsh cry, something between the grunt of a pig and the bellow of a bull; the call of the tigress is more like the prolonged mew of a cat much intensified. During the pairing season the call is sharper and shorter, and ends in a sudden break. At that time, too, they cry at more frequent intervals. The roar of the tiger is quite unlike the call. Once heard it is not easily forgotten. The natives who live in the jungles can tell one tiger from another by colour, size, &c., and they can even distinguish one animal from another by his call. It is very absurd to hear a couple of natives get together and describe the appearance of some tiger they have seen.

In describing a pig, they refer to his height, or the length of his tusks. They describe a fish by putting their fists together, and saying he was so thick, *itna mota.* The head of a tiger is always the most conspicuous part of the body seen in the jungle. They therefore invariably describe him by his head. One man will hold his two hands apart about two feet, and say that the head was *itna burra,* that is, so big. The other, not to be outdone, gives rein to his imagination, and adds another foot. The first immediately fancies discredit will attach to his veracity, and vehemently asserts that there must in that case have been two tigers; and so they go on, till they conclusively prove, that two tigers there must have been, and indeed, if you let them go on, they will soon assure you that, besides the pair of tigers, there must be at least a pair of half-grown cubs. Their imaginations are very fertile, and you must take the information of a native as to tigers with a very large pinch of salt.

For successful tiger shooting much depends on the beating.

When after tiger, general firing should on no account be allowed, and the line should move forward as silently as possible. In light cover, extending over a large area, the elephants should be kept a considerable distance apart, but in thick dense cover the line should be quite close, and beat up slowly and thoroughly, as a tiger may lay up and allow the line to pass him. On no account should an elephant be let to lag behind, and no one should be allowed to rush forward or go in advance. The elephants should move along, steady and even, like a moving wall, the fastest being on the flanks, and accommodating their pace to the general rate of progress. No matter what tempting chances at pig or deer you may have, you must on no account fire except at tiger.

The captain should be in the centre, and the men on the flanks ought to be constantly on the *qui vive*, to see that no cunning tiger outflanks the line. The attention should never wander from the jungle before you, for at any moment a tiger may get up—and I know of no sport where it is necessary to be so continuously on the alert. Every moment is fraught with intense excitement, and when a tiger does really show his stripes before you, the all-absorbing eager excitement of a lifetime is packed in a few brief moments. Not a chance should be thrown away, a long, or even an uncertain shot, is better than none, and if you make one miss, you may not have another chance again that day: for the tiger is chary of showing his stripes, and thinks discretion the better part of valour.

All the line of course are aware, as a rule, when a tiger is on the move, and a good captain (and Joe S., who generally took the direction of our beats, could not well be matched) will wheel the line, double, turn, march, and countermarch, and fairly run the tiger down. At such a time, although you may not actually see the tiger, the excitement is tremendous. You stand erect in the howdah, your favourite gun ready; your attendant behind is as excited as yourself, and sways from side to side to peer into the gloomy depths of the jungle;

in front, the mahout wriggles on his seat, as if by his motion he could urge the elephant to a quicker advance. He digs his toes savagely into his elephant behind the ear; the line is closing up; every eye is fixed on the moving jungle ahead. The roaring of the flames behind, and the crashing of the dried reeds as the elephants force their ponderous frames through the intertwisted stems and foliage, are the only sounds that greet the ear. Suddenly you see the tawny yellow hide, as the tiger slouches along. Your gun rings out a reverberating challenge, as your fatal bullet speeds on its errand. To right and left the echoes ring, as shot after shot is fired at the bounding robber. Then the line closes up, and you form a circle round the stricken beast, and watch his mighty limbs quiver in the death-agony, and as he falls over dead, and powerless for further harm, you raise the heart-felt, pulse-stirring cheer, that finds an echo in every brother sportsman's heart.

Disputes sometimes arise as to whose bullet first drew blood. These are settled by the captain, and from his decision there is no appeal. Many sportsmen put peculiar marks on their bullets, by which they can be recognised, which is a good plan. In an exciting scrimmage every one blazes at the tiger, not one bullet perhaps in five or six takes effect, and every one is ready to claim the skin, as having been pierced with his particular bullet. Disputes are not very common, but an inspection of the wounds, and the bullets found in the body, generally settle the question. After hearing all the pros and cons, the captain generally succeeds in awarding the tiger to the right man.

After a successful day, the news rapidly spreads through the adjacent country, and we may take the line a little out of our way to make a sort of triumphal procession through the villages. On reaching the camp there is sure to be a great crowd waiting to see the slain tigers, the despoilers of the people's flocks and herds.

It is then you hear of all the depredations the dead robber has committed, and it is then you begin to form some faint conception of his enormous destructive powers. Villager after villager unfolds a tale of some favourite heifer, or buffalo, or cow having been struck down, and the copious vocabulary of Hindostanee Billingsgate is almost exhausted, and floods of abuse poured out on the prostrate head.

On cutting open the tiger, parasites are frequently found in the flesh. These are long, white, thread-like worms, and are supposed by some to be Guinea worms. Huge masses of undigested bone and hair are sometimes taken from the intestines, showing that the tiger does not waste much time on mastication, but tears and eats the flesh in large masses. The liver is found to have numbers of separate lobes, and the natives say that this is an infallible test of the age of a tiger, as a separate lobe forms on the liver for each year of the tiger's life. I have certainly found young tigers having but two and three lobes, and old tigers I have found with six, seven, and even eight, but the statement is entirely unsupported by careful observation, and requires authentication before it can be accepted.

A reported kill is a pretty certain sign that there are tigers in the jungle, but there are other signs with which one soon gets familiar. When, for example, you hear deer calling repeatedly, and see them constantly on the move, it is a sign that tiger are in the neighbourhood. When cattle are reluctant to enter the jungle, restless, and unwilling to graze, you may be sure tiger are somewhere about, not far away. A kill is often known by the numbers of vultures that hover about in long, sailing, steady circles. What multitudes of vultures there are. Over head, far up in the liquid ether, you see them circling round and round like dim specks in the distance; farther and farther away, till they seem like bees, then lessen and fade into the infinitude of space. No part of the sky is ever free from their presence. When a kill has

been perceived, you see one come flying along, strong and swift in headlong flight. With the directness of a thunderbolt he speeds to where his loathsome meal lies sweltering in the noonday sun. As he comes nearer and nearer, his repulsive-looking body assumes form and substance. The cruel, ugly bald head, drawn close in between the strong pointed shoulders, the broad powerful wings, with their wide sweep, measured and slow, bear him swiftly past. With a curve and a sweep he circles round, down come the long bony legs, the bald and hideous neck is extended, and with talons quivering for the rotting flesh, and cruel beak agape, he hurries on to his repast, the embodiment of everything ghoul-like and ghastly. In his wake comes another, then twos and threes, anon tens and twenties, till hundreds have collected, and the ground is covered with the hissing, tearing, fiercely clawing crowd. It is a horrible sight to see a heap of vultures battling over a dead bullock. I have seen them so piled up that the under ones were nearly smothered to death; and the writhing contortions of the long bare necks, as the fierce brutes battled with talons and claws, were like the twisting of monster snakes, or the furious writhing of gorgons and furies over some fated victim.

It has been a much debated point with sportsmen and naturalists, whether the eye or the sense of smell guides the vulture to his feast of carrion. I have often watched them. They scan the vast surface spread below them with a piercing and never-tiring gaze. They observe each other. When one is seen to cease his steady circling flight, far up in mid air, and to stretch his broad wings earthwards, the others know that he has espied a meal, and follow his lead; and these in turn are followed by others, till from all quarters flock crowds of these scavengers of the sky. They can detect a dog or jackal from a vast height, and they know by intuition that, where the carcase is there will the dogs and jackals be gathered. I think there can be no doubt that the

vision is the sense they are most indebted to for directing them to their food.

On one occasion I remember seeing a tumultuous heap of them, battling fiercely, as I have just tried to describe, over the carcases of two tigers we had killed near Dumdaha. The dead bodies were hidden partially in a grove of trees, and for a long time there were only some ten or a dozen vultures near. These gorged themselves so fearfully, that they could not rise from the ground, but lay with wings expanded, looking very aldermanic and apoplectic. Bye-and-bye, however, the rush began, and by the time we had struck the tents, there could not have been fewer than 150 vultures, hissing and spitting at each other like angry cats; trampling each other to the dust to get at the carcases; and tearing wildly with talon and beak for a place. In a very short time nothing but mangled bones remained. A great number of the vultures got on to the rotten limb of a huge mango tree. One other proved the last straw, for down came the rotten branch and several of the vultures, tearing at each other, fell heavily to the ground, where they lay quite helpless. As an experiment we shot a miserable, mangy pariah dog that was prowling about the ground seeking garbage and offal. He was shot stone dead, and for a time no vulture ventured near. A crow was the first to begin the feast of death. One of the hungriest of the vultures next approached, and in a few minutes the yet warm body of the poor dog was torn into a thousand fragments, till nothing remained but scattered and disjointed bones.

CHAPTER XXII.

We start for a tiger hunt on the Nepaul frontier—Indian scenery near the border—Lose our way—Cold night—The river by night—Our boat and boatman—Tigers calling on the bank—An anxious moment—Fire at and wound the tigress—Reach Camp—The Nepaulee's adventure with a tiger—The old Major—His appearance and manners—The pompous Jemadar—Nepaulese proverb—Firing the jungle—Start a tiger and shoot him—Another in front—Appearance of the fires by night—The tiger escapes—Too dark to follow up—Coolie shot by mistake during a former hunt.

EARLY in 1875 a military friend of mine was engaged in inspecting the boundary pillars near my factory, between our territory and that of Nepaul. Some of the pillars had been cut away by the river, and the survey map required a little alteration in consequence. Our district magistrate was in attendance, and sent me an invitation to go up and spend a week with them in camp. I had no need to send on tents, as they had every requisite for comfort. I sent off my bed and bedding on Geerdharee Jha's old elephant, a timid, useless brute, fit neither for beating jungle nor for carrying a howdah. My horse I sent on to the ghat or crossing, some ten miles up the river, and after lunch I started. It was a fine cool afternoon, and it was not long ere I reached the neighbouring factory of Imāmnugger. Here I had a little refreshment with Old Tom, and after exchanging greetings, I resumed my way, over a part of the country with which I was totally unacquainted.

I rode on, past villages nestling in the mango groves, past huge tanks, excavated by the busy labour of generations long since departed; past decaying temples overshadowed by

mighty tamarind trees, with the *pepul* and *pakur* insinuating their twining roots amid the shattered and crumbling masonry. In one large village I passed through the bustling bazaar, where the din, and dust, and mingled odours were almost overpowering. The country was now assuming quite an undulating character. The banks of the creeks were steep and rugged, and in some places the water actually tumbled from rock to rock, with a purling pleasant ripple and plash, a welcome sound to a Scotch ear, and a pleasant surprise after the dull, dead, leaden, noiseless flow of the streams further down on the plains.

Far in front lay the gloomy belt of Terai, or border forest, here called the *morung*, where the British territories had their extreme limit in that direction. Behind this belt, tier on tier, rose the mighty ranges of the majestic Himalayas, towering up in solemn grandeur from the bushy masses of forest-clad hills till their snow-capped summits seemed to pierce the sky. The country was covered by green crops, with here and there patches of dingy rice-stubble, and an occasional stretch of dense grass jungle. Quail, partridge, and plover rose from the ground in coveys, as my horse cantered through; and an occasional peafowl or florican scudded across the track as I ambled onward. I asked at a wretched little accumulation of weavers' huts where the ghat was, and if my elephant had gone on. To both my queries I received satisfactory replies, and as the day was now drawing in, I pushed my nag into a sharp canter and hurried forward.

I soon perceived the bulky outline of my elephant ahead, and on coming up, found that my men had come too far up the river, had missed the ghat to which I had sent my spare horse, and were now making for another ferry still higher up. My horse was jaded, so I got on the elephant, and made one of the peons lead the horse behind. It was rapidly getting dark, and the mahout, or elephant driver, a miserable low caste stupid fellow, evidently knew nothing of the

country, and was going at random. I halted at the next village, got hold of the chowkedar, and by a promise of backsheesh, prevailed on him to accompany us and show us the way. We turned off from the direct northerly direction in which we had been going, and made straight for the river, which we could see in the distance, looking chill and grey in the fast fading twilight. We now got on the sandbanks, and had to go cautiously for fear of quicksands. By the time we reached the ghat it was quite dark and growing very cold.

We were quite close to the hills, a heavy dew was falling, and I found that I should have to float down the river for a mile, and then pole up stream in another channel for two miles before I could reach camp.

I got my horse into the boat, ordering the elephant driver to travel all night if he could, as I should expect my things to be at camp early in the morning, and the boatmen pushed off the unwieldy ferry-boat, floating us quietly down the rapid "drumly" stream. All is solemnly still and silent on an Indian river at night. The stream is swift but noiseless. Vast plains and heaps of sand stretch for miles on either bank. There are no villages near the stream. Faintly, far away in the distance, you hear a few subdued sounds, the only evidences of human habitation. There is the tinkle of a cow-bell, the barking of a pariah dog, the monotonous dub-a-dub-dub of a timber-toned tom-tom, muffled and slightly mellowed by the distance. The faint far cries, and occasional halloos of the herd-boys calling to each other, gradually cease, but the monotonous dub-a-dub-dub continues till far into the night.

It was now very cold, and I was glad to borrow a blanket from my peon. At such a time the pipe is a great solace. It soothes the whole system, and plunges one into an agreeable dreamy speculative mood, through which all sorts of fantastic notions revolve. Fancies chase each other quickly, and old memories rise, bitter or sweet, but all tinged

and tinted by the seductive influence of the magic weed. Hail, blessed pipe! the invigorator of the weary, the uncomplaining faithful friend, the consoler of sorrows, and the dispeller of care, the much-prized companion of the solitary wayfarer!

Now a jackal utters a howl on the bank, as our boat shoots past, and the diabolical noise is echoed from knoll to knoll, and from ridge to ridge, as these incarnate devils of the night join in and prolong the infernal chorus. An occasional splash, as a piece of the bank topples over into the stream, rouses the cormorant and gull from their placid dozing on the sandbanks. They squeak and gurgle out an unintelligible protest, then cosily settle their heads again beneath the sheltering wing, and sleep the slumber of the dreamless. A sharp sudden plump, or a lazy surging sound, accompanied by a wheezy blowing sort of hiss, tells us that a *seelun* is disporting himself; or that a fat old "porpus" is bearing his clumsy bulk through the rushing current.

The bank now looms out dark and mysterious, and as we turn the point another long stretch of the river opens out, reflecting the merry twinkle of the myriad stars, that glitter sharp and clear millions of miles overhead. There is now a clattering of bamboo poles. With a grunt of disgust, and a quick catching of the breath, as the cold water rushes up against his thighs, one of the boatmen splashes overboard, and they commence slowly and wearily pushing the boat up stream. We touch the bank a dozen times. The current swoops down and turns us round and round. The men have to put their shoulders under the gunwale, and heave and strain with all their might. The long bamboo poles are plunged into the dark depths of the river, and the men puff, and grunt, and blow, as they bend almost to the bottom of the boat while they push. It is a weary progress. We are dripping wet with dew. Quite close on the bank we hear the hoarse wailing call of a tigress. The call of the tiger comes echoing down between the banks. The men cease

poling. I peer forward into the obscurity. My syce pats, and speaks soothingly to the trembling horse, while my peon with excited fingers fumbles at the straps of my gun-case. For a moment all is intensely still.

I whisper to the boatman to push out a little into the stream. Again the tigress calls, this time so close to us that we could almost fancy we could feel her breath. My gun is ready. The syce holds the horse firmly by the head, and as we leave the bank, we can distinctly see the outline of some large animal, standing out a dark bulky mass against the skyline. I take a steady aim and fire. A roar of astonishment, wrath and pain follows the report. The horse struggles and snorts, the boatman calls out "Oh, my father!" and ejaculates "hi-hi-hi!" in tones of piled-up anguish and apprehension, the peon cries exultantly "Wah wah! khodawund, lug, gea," that bullet has told; oh your highness! and while the boat rocks violently to and fro, I abuse the boatmen, slang the syce, and rush to grasp a pole, while the peon seizes another; for we are drifting rapidly down stream, and may at any moment strike on a bank and topple over. We can hear by the growling and commotion on the bank, that my bullet has indeed told, and that something is hit. We soon get the frightened boatmen quieted down, and after another hour's weary work we spy the white outline of the tents above the bank. A lamp shines out a bright welcome; and although it is nearly twelve at night, the Captain and the magistrate are discussing hot toddy, and waiting my arrival. My spare horse had come on from the ghat, the syce had told them I was coming, and they had been indulging in all sorts of speculations over my non-arrival.

A good supper, and a reeking jorum, soon banished all recollections of my weary journey, and men were ordered to go out at first break of dawn, and see about the wounded tiger. In the morning I was gratified beyond expression to to find a fine tigress, measuring 8 feet 3 inches, had been

brought in, the result of my lucky night shot; the marks of a large tiger were found about the spot, and we determined to beat up for him, and if possible secure his skin, as we already had that of his consort.

Captain S. had some work to finish, and my elephant and bearer had not arrived, so our magistrate and myself walked down to the sandbanks, and amused ourselves for an hour shooting sandpipers and plover; we also shot a pair of mallard and a couple of teal, and then went back to the tents, and were soon busily discussing a hunter's breakfast. While at our meal, my elephant and things arrived, and just then also, the "Major Captān," or Nepaulese functionary, my old friend, came up with eight elephants, and we hurried out to greet the fat, merry-featured old man.

What a quaint, genial old customer he looked, as he bowed and salaamed to us from his elevated seat, his face beaming, and his little bead-like eyes twinkling with pleasure. He was full of an adventure he had as he came along. After crossing a brawling mountain-torrent, some miles from our camp, they entered some dense kair jungle. The kair is, I believe, a species of mimosa; it is a hard wood, growing in a thick scrubby form, with small pointed leaves, a yellowish sort of flower, and sharp thorns studding its branches; it is a favourite resort for pig, and although it is difficult to beat on account of the thorns, tigers are not unfrequently found among the gloomy recesses of a good kair scrub.

As they entered this jungle, some of the men were loitering behind. When the elephants had passed about half way through, the men came rushing up pell mell, with consternation on their faces, reporting that a huge tiger had sprung out on them, and carried off one of their number. The Major and the elephants hurried back, and met the man limping along, bleeding from several scratches, and with a nasty bite in his shoulder, but otherwise more frightened than hurt. The tiger had simply knocked him down, stood over

him for a minute, seized him by the shoulder, and then dashed on through the scrub, leaving him behind half dead with pain and fear.

It was most amusing to hear the fat little Major relate the story. He went through all the by-play incident to the piece, and as he got excited, stood right up on his narrow pad. His gesticulations were most vehement, and as the elephant was rather unsteady, and his footing to say the least precarious, he seemed every moment as if he must topple over. The old warrior, however, was equal to the occasion; without for an instant abating the vigour of his narrative, he would clutch at the greasy, matted locks of his mahout, and steady himself, while he volubly described incident after incident. As he warmed with his subject, and tried to show us how the tiger must have pounced on the man, he would let go and use his hands in illustration; the old elephant would give another heave, and the fat little man would make another frantic grab at the patient mahout's hair. The whole scene was most comical, and we were in convulsions of laughter.

The news, however, foreboded ample sport; we now had certain *khubber* of at least two tigers; we were soon under weigh; the wounded man had been sent back to the Major's headquarters on an elephant, and in time recovered completely from his mauling. As we jogged along, we had a most interesting talk with the Major Captān. He was wonderfully well informed, considering he had never been out of Nepaul. He knew all about England, our army, our mode of government, our parliament, and our Queen; whenever he alluded to her Majesty he salaamed profoundly, whether as a tribute of respect to her, or in compliment to us as loyal subjects, we could not quite make out. He described to us the route home by the Suez Canal, and the fun of his talk was much heightened by his applying the native names to everything; London was *Shuhur*, the word meaning

"a city," and he told us it was built on the *Thamäss nuddee*, by which he meant the Thames river.

Our magistrate had a Jemadar of Peons with him, a sort of head man among the servants. This man, abundantly bedecked with ear-rings, finger-rings, and other ornaments, was a useless, bullying sort of fellow; dressed to the full extent of Oriental foppishness, and because he was the magistrate's servant, he thought himself entitled to order the other servants about in the most lordly way. He was now making himself peculiarly officious, shouting to the drivers to go here and there, to do this and do that, and indulging in copious torrents of abuse, without which it seems impossible for a native subordinate to give directions on any subject. We were all rather amused, and could not help bursting into laughter, as, inflated with a sense of his own importance, he began abusing one of the native drivers of the Nepaulee chief; this man did not submit tamely to his insolence. To him the magistrate was nobody, and the pompous Jemadar a perfect nonentity. He accordingly turned round and poured forth a perfect flood of invective. Never was collapse more utter. The Jemadar took a back seat at once, and no more that day did we hear his melodious voice in tones of imperious command.

The old Major chuckled, and rubbed his fat little hands, and leaning over to me said, "at home a lion, but abroad a lamb," for, surrounded by his women at home, the man would twirl his moustaches, look fierce and fancy himself a very tiger; but, no sooner did he go abroad, and mix with men as good, if not better than himself, than he was ready to eat any amount of humble pie.

We determined first of all to beat for the tiger whose tracks had been seen near where I had fired my lucky shot the preceding night. A strong west wind was blowing, and dense clouds of sand were being swept athwart our line, from the vast plains of fine white sand bordering the river for

miles. As we went along we fired the jungle in our rear, and the strong wind carried the flames raging and roaring through the dense jungle with amazing fury. One elephant got so frightened at the noise behind him, that he fairly bolted for the river, and could not be persuaded back into the line.

Disturbed by the fire, we saw numerous deer and pig, but being after tiger we refrained from shooting at them. The Basmattea Tuppra, which was the scene of our present hunt, were famous jungles, and many a tiger had been shot there by the Purneah Club in bygone days. The annual ravages of the impetuous river had, however, much changed the face of the country; vasts tracts of jungle had been obliterated by deposits of sand from its annual incursions. Great skeletons of trees stood everywhere, stretching out bare and unsightly branches, all bending to the south, showing the mighty power of the current, when it made its annual progress of devastation over the surrounding country. Now, however, it was like a thin streak of silver, flashing back the fierce rays of the meridian sun. Through the blinding clouds of fine white sand we could at times, during a temporary lull, see its ruffled surface. And we were glad when we came on the tracks of the tiger, which led straight from the stream, in the direction of some thick tree jungle at no great distance. We gladly turned our backs to the furious clouds of dust and gusts of scorching wind, and, led by a Nepaulee tracker, were soon crashing heavily through the jungle.

When hunting with elephants, the Nepaulese beat in a dense line, the heads of the elephants touching each other. In this manner we were now proceeding, when S. called out, "There goes the tiger."

We looked up, and saw a very large tiger making off for a deep watercourse, which ran through the jungle some 200 yards ahead of the line. We hurried up as fast as we could, putting out a fast elephant on either flank, to see that the

cunning brute did not sneak either up or down the nullah, under cover of the high banks. This, however, was not his object. We saw him descend into the nullah, and almost immediately top the further bank, and disappear into the jungle beyond.

Pressing on at a rapid jolting trot, we dashed after him in hot pursuit. The jungle seemed somewhat lighter on ahead. In the distance we could see some dangurs at work breaking up land, and to the right was a small collection of huts with a beautiful riband of green crops, a perfect oasis in the wilderness of sand and parched-up grass. Forming into line we pressed on. The tiger was evidently lying up, probably deterred from breaking across the open by the sight of the dangurs at work. My heart was bounding with excitement. We were all intensely eager, and thought no more of the hot wind and blinding dust. Just then Captain S. saw the brute sneaking along to the left of the line, trying to outflank us, and break back. He fired two shots rapidly with his Express, and the second one, taking effect in the neck of the tiger, bowled him over as he stood. He was a mangy-looking brute, badly marked, and measured eight feet eleven inches. He did not have a chance of charging, and probably had little heart for a fight.

We soon had him padded, and then proceeded straight north, to the scene of the Major's encounter with the tiger in the morning. The jungle was well trampled down; there were numerous streams and pools of water, occasional clumps of bamboos, and abrupt ridgy undulations. It was the very jungle for tiger, and elated by our success in having bagged one already, we were all in high spirits. The line of fire we could see far in the distance, sweeping on like the march of fate, and we could have shot numerous deer, but reserved our fire for nobler game. It was getting well on in the afternoon when we came up to the kair jungle. We beat right up to where the man had been seized, and could see the

marks of the struggle distinctly enough. We beat right through the jungle with no result, and as it was now getting rather late, the old Major signified his desire to bid us good evening. As this meant depriving us of eight elephants, we prevailed on him to try one spare straggling corner that we had not gone through. He laughed the idea to scorn of getting a tiger there, saying there was no cover. One elephant, however, was sent while we were talking. Our elephants were all standing in a group, and the mahout on his solitary elephant was listlessly jogging on in a purposeless and desultory manner, when we suddenly heard the elephant pipe out a shrill note of alarm, and the mahout yelled "Bagh! Bagh!" tiger! tiger! The Captain was again the lucky man. The tiger, a much finer and stronger built animal than the one we had already killed, was standing not eighty paces off, showing his teeth, his bristles erect, and evidently in a bad temper. He had been crouching among some low bushes, and seeing the elephant bearing directly down on him, he no doubt imagined his retreat had been discovered. At all events there he was, and he presented a splendid aim. He was a noble-looking specimen as he stood there grim and defiant. Captain S. took aim, and lodged an Express bullet in his chest. It made a fearful wound, and the ferocious brute writhed and rolled about in agony. We quickly surrounded him, and a bullet behind the ear from my No. 16 put an end to his misery.

The old Major now bade us good evening, and after padding the second tiger, and much elated at our success, we began to beat homewards, shooting at everything that rose before us A couple of tremendous pig got up before me, and dashed through a clear stream that was purling peacefully in its pebbly bed. As the boar was rushing up the farther bank, I deposited a pellet in his hind quarters. He gave an angry grunt and tottered on, but presently pulled up, and seemed determined to have some revenge for his hurt. As my

elephant came up the bank, the gallant boar tried to charge, but, already wounded and weak from loss of blood, he tottered and staggered about. My elephant would not face him, so I gave him another shot behind the shoulder, and padded him for the *moosahurs* and sweepers in camp. Just then one of the policemen started a young hog-deer, and several of the men got down and tried to catch the little thing alive. They soon succeeded, and the cries of the poor little *butcha*, that is "young one," were most plaintive.

The wind had now subsided, there was a red angry glare, as the level rays of the setting sun shimmered through the dense clouds of dust that loaded the atmosphere. It was like the dull, red, coppery hue which presages a storm. The vast morung jungle lay behind us, and beyond that the swelling wooded hills, beginning to show dark and indistinct against the gathering gloom. A long line of cattle were wending their way homeward to the batan, and the tinkle of the big copper bell fell pleasingly on our ears. In the distance, we could see the white canvas of the tents, gleaming in the rays of the setting sun. A vast circular line of smouldering fire, flickering and flaring fitfully, and surmounted by huge volumes of curling smoke, showed the remains of the fierce tornado of flame that had raged at noon, when we lit the jungle. The jungle was very light, and much trodden down, our three howdah elephants were not far apart, and we were chatting cheerfully together and discussing the incidents of the day. My bearer was sitting behind me in the back of the howdah, and I had taken out my ball cartridge from my No. 12 breechloader, and had replaced them with shot. Just then my mahout raised his hand, and in a hoarse excited whisper called out,

"Look, sahib, a large tiger!"

"Where?" we all exclaimed, getting excited at once. He pointed in front to a large object, looking for all the world like a huge dun cow.

"Why, you fool, that is a bullock," I exclaimed.

My bearer, who had also been intently gazing, now said,

"No, sahib! that is a tiger, and a large one."

At that moment, it turned partly round, and I at once saw that the men were right, and that it was a veritable tiger, and seemingly a monster in size. I at once called to Captain S. and the magistrate, who had by this time fallen a little behind.

"Look out, you fellows! here's a tiger in front."

At first they thought I was joking, but a glance confirmed the truth of what I had said. When I first saw the brute, he was evidently sneaking after the cattle, and was about sixty paces from me. He was so intent on watching the herd, that he had not noticed our approach. He was now, however, evidently alarmed and making off. By the time I called out, he must have been over eighty yards away. I had my No. 12 in my hand, loaded with shot; it was no use; I put it down and took up my No. 16; this occupied a few seconds; I fired both barrels; the first bullet was in excellent line but rather short, the second went over the animal's back, and neither touched him. It made him, however, quicken his retreat, and when Captain S. fired, he must have been fully one hundred and fifty yards away; as it was now somewhat dusky, he also missed. He fired another long shot with his rifle, but missed again. Oh that unlucky change of cartridges in my No. 12! But for that—but there—we are always wise after the event. We never expected to see a tiger in such open country, especially as we had been over the same ground before, firing pretty often as we came along.

We followed up of course, but it was now fast getting dark, and though we beat about for some time, we could not get another glimpse of the tiger. He was seemingly a very large male, dark-coloured, and in splendid condition. We must have got him, had it been earlier, as he could not have gone far forward, for the lines of fire were beyond him, and we had

him beween the fire and the elephants. We got home about 6.30, rather disappointed at missing such a glorious prize, so true is it that a sportsman's soul is never satisfied. But we had rare and most unlooked-for luck, and we felt considerably better after a good dinner, and indulged in hopes of getting the big fellow next morning.

In the same jungles, some years ago, a very sad accident occurred. A party were out tiger-shooting, and during one of the beats, a cowherd, hearing the noise of the advancing elephants, crouched behind a bush, and covered himself with his blanket. At a distance he looked exactly like a pig, and one of the shooters mistook him for one. He fired, and hit the poor herd in the hip. As soon as the mistake was perceived, everything was done for the poor fellow. His wound was dressed as well as they could do it, and he was sent off to the doctor in a dhoolie, a sort of covered litter, slung on a pole and carried on men's shoulders. It was too late, the poor coolie died on the road, from shock and loss of blood. Such mistakes occur very seldom, and this was such a natural one, that no one could blame the unfortunate sportsman, and certainly no one felt keener regret than he did. The coolie's family was amply provided for, which was all that remained to be done.

This is the only instance I know, where fatal results have followed such an accident. I have known several cases of beaters peppered with shot, generally from their own carelessness, and disregard of orders, but a salve in the shape of a few rupees has generally proved the most effective ointment. I have known some rascals say, they were sorry they had not been lucky enough to be wounded, as they considered a punctured cuticle nothing to set against the magnificent douceur of four or five rupees. One impetuous scamp, being told not to go in front of the line during a beat near Burgamma, replied to the warning caution of his jemadar,

"Oh, never mind, if I get shot I will get backsheesh."

Whether this was a compliment to the efficacy of our treatment (by the silver ointment), or to the inaccuracy and harmlessness of our shooting, I leave the reader to judge.

Our bag during this lucky day, including the tigress killed by my shot on the river bank, was as follows: three tigers, one boar, four deer, including the young one taken alive, eight sandpipers, nine plovers, two mallards, and two teal.

CHAPTER XXIII.

We resume the beat—The hog-deer—Nepaulese villages—Village granaries—Tiger in front—A hit! a hit!—Following up the wounded tiger—Find him dead—Tiffin in the village—The Patair jungle—Search for tiger—Gone away!—An elephant steeplechase in pursuit—Exciting chase—The Morung jungle—Magnificent scenery—Skinning the tiger—Incidents of tiger hunting.

NEXT morning, both the magistrate and myself felt very ill, headachy and sick, with violent vomiting and retching; Captain S. attributed it to the fierce hot wind and exposure of the preceding day, but we, the sufferers, blamed the *dekchees* or cooking pots. These *dekchees* are generally made of copper, coated or tinned over with white metal once a month or oftener; if the tinning is omitted, or the copper becomes exposed by accident or neglect, the food cooked in the pots sometimes gets tainted with copper, and produces nausea and sickness in those who eat it. I have known, within my own experience, cases of copper poisoning that have terminated fatally. It is well always thoroughly to inspect the kitchen utensils, particularly when in camp; unless carefully watched and closely supervised, servants get very careless, and let food remain in these copper vessels. This is always dangerous, and should never be allowed.

In consequence of our indisposition, we did not start till the forenoon was far advanced, and the hot west wind had again begun to sweep over the prairie-like stretches of sand and withered grass. We commenced beating up by the Batan or cattle stance, near which we had seen the big tiger, the preceding evening. S., however, became so sick and

giddy, that he had to return to camp, and Captain S. and I continued the beat alone. Having gone over the same ground only yesterday, we did not expect a tiger so near to camp, more especially as the fire had made fearful havoc with the tall grass. Hog-deer were very numerous; they are not as a rule easily disturbed; they are of a reddish brown colour, not unlike that of the Scotch red deer, and rush through the jungle, when alarmed, with a succession of bounding leaps; they make very pretty shooting, and when young, afford tender and well-flavoured venison. One hint I may give. When you shoot a buck, see that he is at once denuded of certain appendages, else the flesh will get rank and disagreeable to eat. The bucks have pretty antlers, but are not very noble looking. The does are somewhat lighter in colour, and do not seem to consort together in herds like antelopes; there are rarely more than five in a group, though I have certainly seen more on several occasions.

This morning we were unlucky with our deer. I shot three, and Captain S. shot at and wounded three, not one of which, however, did we bag. This part of the country is exclusively inhabited by Parbutteas, the native name for Nepaulese settled in British territory. Over the frontier line, the villagers are called Pahareeas, signifying mountaineers or hillmen, from Pahar, a mountain. We beat up to a Parbuttea village, with its conical-roofed huts; men and women were engaged in plaiting long coils of rice straw into cable-looking ropes. A few split bamboos are fastened into the ground, in a circle, and these ropes are then coiled round, in and out, between the stakes; this makes a huge circular vat-shaped repository, open at both ends; it is then lifted up and put on a platform coated with mud, and protected from rats and vermin by the pillars being placed on smooth, inverted earthen pots. The coils of straw are now plastered outside and in with a mixture of mud, chaff, and cow-dung, and allowed to dry; when dried the hut is filled with grain

and securely roofed and thatched. This forms the invariable village granary, and looks at a distance not unlike a stack or rick of corn, round a farm at home. By the abundance of these granaries in a village, one can tell at a glance whether the season has been a good one, and whether the frugal inhabitants of the clustering little hamlet are in pretty comfortable circumstances. If they are under the sway of a grasping and unscrupulous landlord, they not unfrequently bury their grain in clay-lined chambers in the earth, and have always enough for current wants, stored up in the sun-baked clay repositories mentioned in a former chapter.

Beyond the village we entered some thick Patair jungle. Its greenness was refreshing after the burnt-up and withered grass jungle. We were now in a hollow bordering the stream, and somewhat protected from the scorching wind, and the stinging clouds of fine sand and red dust. The brook looked so cool and refreshing, and the water so clear and pellucid, that I was about to dismount to take a drink and lave my heated head and face, when a low whistle to my right made me look in that direction, and I saw the Captain waving his hand excitedly, and pointing ahead. He was higher up the bank than I was, and in very dense Patair; a ridge ran between his front of the line and mine, so that I could only see his howdah, and the bulk of the elephant's body was concealed from me by the grass on this ridge.

I closed up diagonally across the ridge; S. still waving to me to hurry up; as I topped it, I spied a large tiger slouching along in the hollow immediately below me. He saw me at the same instant, and bounded on in front of S. His Express was at his shoulder on the instant; he fired, and a tremendous spurt of blood showed a hit, a hit, a palpable hit. The tiger was nowhere visible, and not a cry or a motion could we hear or see, to give us any clue to the whereabouts of the wounded animal. We followed up however, quickly but cautiously, expecting every instant a furious charge.

We must have gone at least a hundred yards, when right in front of me I descried the tiger, crouching down, its head resting on its fore paws, and to all appearance settling for a spring. It was about twenty yards from me, and taking a rather hasty aim, I quickly fired both barrels straight at the head. I could only see the head and paws, but these I saw quite distinctly. My elephant was very unsteady, and both my bullets went within an inch of the tiger's head, but fortunately missed completely. I say fortunately, for finding the brute still remaining quite motionless, we cautiously approached, and found it was stone dead. The perfect naturalness of the position, however, might well have deceived a more experienced sportsman. The beast was lying crouched on all fours, as if in the very act of preparing to spring. The one bullet had killed it; the wound was in the lungs, and the internal bleeding had suffocated it, but here was a wonderful instance of the tiger's tenacity of life, even when sorely wounded, for it had travelled over a hundred and thirty yards after S. had shot it.

It was lucky I missed, for my bullets would have spoiled the skull. She was a very handsome, finely-marked tigress, a large specimen, for on applying the tape we found she measured exactly nine feet. Before descending to measure her, we were joined by the old Major Captān, whose elephants we had for some time descried in the distance. His congratulations were profuse, and no doubt sincere, and after padding the tigress, we hied to the welcome shelter of one of the village houses, where we discussed a hearty and substantial tiffin.

During tiffin, we were surrounded by a bevy of really fair and buxom lasses. They wore petticoats of striped blue cloth, and had their arms and shoulders bare, and their ears loaded with silver ornaments. They were merry, laughing, comely damsels, with none of the exaggerated shyness and affected prudery of the women of the plains. We were

offered plantains, milk, and chuppaties, and an old patriarch came out leaning on his staff, to revile and abuse the tigress. From some of the young men we heard of a fresh kill to the north of the village, and after tiffin we proceeded in that direction, following up the course of the limpid stream, whose gurgling ripple sounded so pleasantly in our ears.

Far ahead to the right, and on the further bank of the stream, we could see dense curling volumes of smoke, and leaping pyramids of flame, where a jungle fire was raging in some thick acacia scrub. As we got nearer, the heat became excessive, and the flames, fanned into tremendous fury by the fierce west wind, tore through the dry thorny bushes. Our elephants were quite unsteady, and did not like facing the fire. We made a slight detour, and soon had the roaring wall of flame behind us. We were now entering on a moist, circular, basin-shaped hollow. Among the patair roots were the recent marks of great numbers of wild pigs, where they had been foraging among the stiff clay for these esculents. The patair is like a huge bulrush, and the elephants are very fond of its succulent, juicy, cool-looking leaves. Those in our line kept tearing up huge tufts of it, thrashing out the mud and dirt from the roots against their fore-legs, and with a grunt of satisfaction, making it slowly disappear in their cavernous mouths. There was considerable noise, and the jungle was nearly as high as the howdahs, presenting the appearance of an impenetrable screen of vivid green. We beat and rebeat, across and across, but there was no sign of the tiger. The banks of the nullah were very steep, rotten ooking, and dangerous. We had about eighteen elephants, namely, ten of our own, and eight belonging to the Nepaulese. We were beating very close, the elephants' heads almost touching. This is the way they always beat in Nepaul. We thought we had left not a spot in the basin untouched, and Captain S. was quite satisfied that there could be no tiger there. It was a splendid jungle for cover, so thick,

dense, and cool. I was beating along the edge of the creek, which ran deep and silent, between the gloomy sedge-covered banks. In a placid little pool I saw a couple of widgeon all unconscious of danger, their glossy plumage reflected in the clear water. I called to Captain S., "We are sold this time, Captain, there's no tiger here!"

"I'm afraid not," he answered.

"Shall I bag those two widgeon?" I asked.

"All right," was the response.

Putting in shot cartridge, I shot both the widgeon, but we were all astounded to see the tiger we had so carefully and perseveringly searched for, bound out of a crevice in the bank, almost right under my elephant. Off he went with a smothered roar, that set our elephants hurrying backwards and forwards. There was a commotion along the whole line. The jungle was too dense for us to see anything. It was one more proof how these hill tigers will lie close, even in the midst of a line.

S. called out to me to remain quiet, and see if we could trace the tiger's progress by any rustling in the cover. Looking down we saw the kill, close to the edge of the water. A fast elephant was sent on ahead, to try and ascertain whether the tiger was likely to break beyond the circle of the little basin-shaped valley. We gathered round the kill; it was quite fresh; a young buffalo. The Major told us that in his experience, a male tiger always begins on the neck first. A female always at the hind quarters. A few mouthfuls only had been eaten, and according to the Major, it must have been a tigress, as the part devoured was from the hind quarters.

While we were talking over these things, a frenzied shout from the driver of our naka elephant caused us to look in his direction. He was gesticulating wildly, and bawling at the top of his voice, "Come, come quickly, sahibs, the tiger is running away."

Now commenced such a mad and hurried scramble as I have never witnessed before or since, from the back of an elephant. As we tore through the tangled dense green patair, the broad leaves crackled like crashing branches, the huge elephants surged ahead like ships rocking in a gale of wind, and the mahouts and attendants on the pad elephants, shouted and urged on their shuffling animals, by excited cries and resounding whacks.

In the retinue of the Major, were several men with elephant spears or goads. These consist of a long, pliant, polished bamboo, with a sharp spike at the end, which they call a *jhetha*. These men now came hurrying round the ridge, among the opener grass, and as we emerged from the heavy cover, they began goading the elephants behind and urging them to their most furious pace. On ahead, nearly a quarter of a mile away, we could see a huge tiger making off for the distant morung at a rapid sling trot. His lithe body shone before us, and urged us to the most desperate efforts. It was almost a bare plateau. There was scarcely any cover, only here and there a few stunted acacia bushes. The dense forest was two or three miles ahead, but there were several nasty steep banks, and precipitous gullies with deep water rushing between. Attached to each Nepaulee pad, by a stout curiously plaited cord, ornamented with fancy knots and tassels of silk, was a pestle-shaped instrument, not unlike an auctioneer's hammer. It was quaintly carved, and studded with short, blunt, shining, brass nails or spikes. I had noticed these hanging down from the pads, and had often wondered what they were for. I was now to see them used. While the mahouts in front rained a shower of blows on the elephant's head, and the spear-men pricked him up from behind with their jhethas, the occupant of the pad, turning round with his face to the tail, belaboured the poor hathee with the auctioneer's hammer. The blows rattled on the elephant's rump. The brutes trumpeted with pain, but they

did put on the pace, and travelled as I never imagined an elephant *could* travel. Past bush and brake, down precipitous ravine, over the stones, through the thorny scrub, dashing down a steep bank here, plunging madly through a deep stream there, we shuffled along. We must have been going fully seven miles an hour. The pestle-shaped hammer is called a *lohath*, and most unmercifully were they wielded. We were jostled and jolted, till every bone ached again. Clouds of dust were driven before our reeling waving line. How the Nepaulese shouted and capered. We were all mad with excitement. I shouted with the rest. The fat little Major kicked his heels against the sides of his elephant, as if he were spurring a Derby winner to victory. Our usually sedate captain yelled—actually yelled!—in an agony of excitement, and tried to execute a war dance of his own on the floor of his howdah. Our guns rattled, the chains clanked and jangled, the howdahs rocked and pitched from side to side. We made a desperate effort. The poor elephants made a gallant race of it. The foot men perspired and swore, but it was not to be. Our striped friend had the best of the start, and we gained not an inch upon him. To our unspeakable mortification, he reached the dense cover on ahead, where we might as well have sought for a needle in a haystack. Never, however, shall I forget that mad headlong scramble. Fancy an elephant steeplechase. Reader, it was sublime; but we ached for it next day.

The old Major and his fleet racing elephants now left us, and our jaded beasts took us slowly back in the direction of our camp. It was a fine wild view on which we were now gazing. Behind us the dark, gloomy, impenetrable morung, the home of ever-abiding fever and ague. Behind that the countless multitude of hills, swelling here and receding there, a jumbled heap of mighty peaks and fretted pinnacles, with their glistening sides and dark shadowless ravines, their mighty scaurs, and their abrupt serrated edges showing out

clearly and boldly defined against the evening sky. Far to the right, the shining river—a riband of burnished steel, for its waters were a deep steely blue—rolled its swift flood along amid shining sandbanks. In front, the vast undulating plain, with grove, and rill, and smoking hamlet, stretched at our feet in a lovely panorama of blended and harmonious colour. We were now high up above the plain, and the scene was one of the finest I have ever witnessed in India. The wind had gone down, and the oblique rays of the sun lit up the whole vast panorama with a lurid light, which was heightened in effect by the dust-laden atmosphere, and the volumes of smoke from the now distant fires, hedging in the far horizon with curtains of threatening grandeur and gloom. That far away canopy of dust and smoke formed a wonderful contrast to the shining snow-capped hills behind. Altogether it was a day to be remembered. I have seen no such strange and unearthly combination of shade and colour in any landscape before or since.

On the way home we bagged a florican and a very fine mallard, and reached the camp utterly fagged to find our worthy magistrate very much recovered, and glad to congratulate us on our having bagged the tigress. After a plunge in the river, and a rare camp dinner—such a meal as only an Indian sportsman can procure—we lay back in our cane chairs, and while the fragrant smoke from the mild Manilla curled lovingly about the roof of the tent, we discussed the day's proceedings, and fought our battles over again.

A rather animated discussion arose about the length of the tiger—as to its frame merely, and we wondered what difference the skin would make in the length of the animal. As it was a point we had never heard mooted before, we determined to see for ourselves. We accordingly went out into the beautiful moonlight, and superintended the skinning of the tigress. The skin was taken off most artistically.

We had carefully measured the animal before skinning. She was exactly nine feet long. We found the skin made a difference of only four inches, the bare carcase from tip of nose to extreme point of tail measuring eight feet eight inches.

As an instance of tigers taking to trees, our worthy magistrate related that in Rajmehal he and a friend had wounded a tiger, and subsequently lost him in the jungle. In vain they searched in every conceivable direction, but could find no trace of him. They were about giving up in despair, when S., raising his hat, happened to look up, and there, on a large bough directly overhead, he saw the wounded tiger lying extended at full length, some eighteen feet from the ground. They were not long in leaving the dangerous vicinity, and it was not long either ere a well-directed shot brought the tiger down from his elevated perch.

These after-dinner stories are not the least enjoyable part of a tiger-hunting party. Round the camp table in a snug, well-lighted tent, with all the "materials" handy, I have listened to many a tale of thrilling adventure. S. was full of reminiscences, and having seen a deal of tiger shooting in various parts of India, his recollections were much appreciated. To show that the principal danger in tiger shooting is not from the tiger himself, but from one's elephant becoming panic-stricken and bolting, he told how a Mr. Aubert, a Benares planter, lost his life. A tiger had been "spined" by a shot, and the line gathered round the prostrate monster to watch its death-struggle. The elephant on which the unfortunate planter sat got demoralised and attempted to bolt. The mahout endeavoured to check its rush, and in desperation the elephant charged straight down, close past the tiger, which lay writhing and roaring under a huge overhanging tree. The elephant was rushing directly under this tree, and a large branch would have swept howdah and everything it

contained clean off the elephant's back, as easily as one would brush off a fly. To save himself Aubert made a leap for the branch, the elephant forging madly ahead; and the howdah, being smashed like match-wood, fell on the tiger below, who was tearing and clawing at everything within his reach. Poor Aubert got hold of the branch with his hands, and clung with all the desperation of one fighting for his life. He was right above the wounded tiger, but his grasp on the tree was not a firm one. For a moment he hung suspended above the furious animal, which, mad with agony and fury, was a picture of demoniac rage. The poor fellow could hold no longer, and fell right on the tiger. It was nearly at its last gasp, but it caught hold of Aubert by the foot, and in a final paroxysm of pain and rage chawed the foot clean off, and the poor fellow died next day from the shock and loss of blood. He was one of four brothers who all met untimely deaths from accidents. This one was killed by the tiger, another was thrown from a vehicle and killed on the spot, the third was drowned, and the fourth shot by accident.

Our bag to-day was one tiger, one florican, one mallard and two widgeon. On cutting the tiger open, we found that the bullet had entered on the left side, and, as we suspected, had entered the lungs. It had, however, made a terrible wound. We found that it had penetrated the heart and liver, gone forward through the chest, and smashed the right shoulder. Notwithstanding this fearful wound, showing the tremendous effects of the Express bullet, the tiger had gone on for the distance I have mentioned, after which it must have fallen stone-dead. It was a marvellous instance of vitality, even after the heart, liver, and lungs had been pierced. The liver had six lobes, and it was then I heard for the first time, that with the natives this was an infallible sign of the age of a tiger. The old Major firmly believed it, and told us it was quite an accepted article of faith with all

native sportsmen. Facts subsequently came under my own observation which seemed to give great probability to the theory, but it is one on which I would not like to give a decided opinion, till after hearing the experiences of other sportsmen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Camp of the Nepaulee chief—Quicksands—Elephants crossing rivers—Tiffin at the Nepaulee camp—We beat the forest for tiger—Shoot a young tiger—Red ants in the forest—Bhowras or ground bees—The *ursus labialis* or long-lipped bear—Recross the stream—Florican—Stag running the gauntlet of flame—Our bag—Start for factory—Remarks on elephants—Precautions useful for protection from the sun in tiger shooting—The *puggree*—Cattle breeding in India, and wholesale deaths of cattle from disease—Nathpore—Ravages of the river—Mrs. Gray, an old resident in the jungles—Description of her surroundings.

NEXT morning we started beating due east, setting fire to the jungle as we went along. The roaring and crackling of the flames startled the elephant on which Captain S. was riding, and going away across country at a furious pace, it was with difficulty that it could be stopped. We crossed the frontier line a short distance from camp, and entered a dense jungle of thorny acacia, with long dry grass almost choking the trees. They were dry and stunted, and when we dropped a few lights amongst such combustible material, the fire was splendid beyond description. How the flames surged through the withered grass. We were forced to pause and admire the magnificent sight. The wall of flame tore along with inconceivable rapidity, and the blinding volumes of smoke obscured the country for miles. The jungle was full of deer and pig. One fine buck came bounding along past our line, but I stopped him with a single bullet through the neck. He fell over with a tremendous crash, and turning a complete somersault broke off both his horns with the force of the fall.

We beat down a shallow sandy watercourse, and could see the camp of the old Major on the high bank beyond.

Farther down the stream there was a small square fort, the whitewashed walls of which flashed back the rays of the sun, and grouped round it were some ruinous-looking huts, several snowy tents, and a huge shamiana or canopy, under which we could see a host of attendants spreading carpets, placing chairs, and otherwise making ready for us. The banks of the stream were very steep, but the guide at length brought us to what seemed a safe and fordable passage. On the further side was a flat expanse of seemingly firm and dry sand, but no sooner had our elephants begun to cross it, than the whole sandbank for yards began to rock and tremble; the water welled up over the footmarks of the elephants, and S. called out to us, "Fussun, Fussun!" quicksand, quicksand! We scattered the elephants, and tried to hurry them over the dangerous bit of ground with shouts and cries of encouragement.

The poor animals seemed thoroughly to appreciate the danger, and shuffled forward as quickly as they could. All got over in safety except the last three. The treacherous sand, rendered still more insecure by the heavy tread of so many ponderous animals, now gave way entirely, and the three hapless elephants were left floundering in the tenacious hold of the dreaded fussun. Two of the three were not far from the firm bank, and managed to extricate themselves after a short struggle; but the third had sunk up to the shoulders, and could scarcely move. All hands immediately began cutting long grass and forming it into bundles. These were thrown to the sinking elephant. He rolled from side to side, the sand quaking and undulating round him in all directions. At times he would roll over till nearly half his body was invisible. Some of the Nepaulese ventured near, and managed to undo the harness-ropes that were holding on the pad. The sagacious brute fully understood his danger, and the efforts we were making for his assistance. He managed to get several of the big bundles of grass under

his feet, and stood there looking at us with a most pathetic pleading expression, and trembling, as if with an ague, from fear and exhaustion.

The old Major came down to meet us, and a crowd of his men added their efforts to ours, to help the unfortunate elephant. We threw in bundle after bundle of grass, till we had the yielding sand covered with a thick passage of firmly bound fascines, on which the hathee, staggering and floundering painfully, managed to reach firm land. He was so completely exhausted that he could scarcely walk to the tents, and we left him there to the care of his attendants. This is a very common episode in tiger hunting, and does not always terminate so fortunately. In running water, the quicksand is not so dangerous, as the force of the stream keeps washing away the sand, and does not allow it to settle round the legs of the elephant; but on dry land, a dry fussun, as it is called, is justly feared; and many a valuable animal has been swallowed up in its slow, deadly, tenacious grasp.

In crossing sand, the heaviest and slowest elephants should go first, preceded by a light, nimble pioneer. If the leading elephant shows signs of sinking, the others should at once turn back, and seek some safer place. In all cases the line should separate a little, and not follow in each other's footsteps. The indications of a quicksand are easily recognised. If the surface of the sand begins to oscillate and undulate with a tremulous rocking motion, it is always wise to seek some other passage. Looking back, after elephants have passed, you will often see what was a perfectly dry flat, covered with several inches of water. When water begins to ooze up in any quantity, after a few elephants have passed, it is much safer to make the remainder cross at some spot farther on.

In crossing a deep swift river, the elephants should enter the water in a line, ranged up and down the river. That is,

the line should be ranged along the bank, and enter the water at right angles to the current, and not in Indian file. The strongest elephants should be up stream, as they help to break the force of the current for the weaker and smaller animals down below. It is a fine sight to see some thirty or forty of these huge animals crossing a deep and rapid river. Some are reluctant to strike out, when they begin to enter the deepest channel, and try to turn back; the mahouts and "mates" shout, and belabour them with bamboo poles. The trumpeting of the elephants, the waving of the trunks, disporting, like huge water-snakes, in the perturbed current, the splashing of the bamboos, the dark bodies of the natives swimming here and there round the animals, the unwieldy boat piled high with howdahs and pads, the whole heap surmounted by a group of sportsmen with their gleaming weapons, and variegated puggrees, make up a picturesque and memorable sight. Some of the strong swimmers among the elephants seem to enjoy the whole affair immensely. They dip their huge heads entirely under the current, the sun flashes on the dark hide, glistening with the dripping water; the enormous head emerges again slowly, like some monstrous antediluvian creation, and with a succession of these ponderous appearances and disappearances, the mighty brutes forge through the surging water. When they reach a shallow part, they pipe with pleasure, and send volumes of fluid splashing against their heaving flanks, scattering the spray all round in mimic rainbows.

At all times the Koosee was a dangerous stream to cross, but during the rains I have seen the strongest and best swimming elephants taken nearly a mile down stream; and in many instances they have been drowned, their vast bulk and marvellous strength being quite unable to cope with the tremendous force of the raging waters.

When we had got comfortably seated under the shamiana, a crowd of attendants brought us baskets of fruit and a very

nice cold collation of various Indian dishes and curries. We did ample justice to the old soldier's hospitable offerings, and then betel-nut, cardamums, cloves, and other spices, and paun leaves, were handed round on a silver salver, beautifully embossed and carved with quaint devices. We lit our cigars, our beards and handkerchiefs were anointed with attar of roses; and the old Major then informed us that there was good khubber of tiger in the wood close by.

The trees were splendid specimens of forest growth, enormously thick, beautifully umbrageous, and growing very close together. There was a dense undergrowth of tangled creeper, and the most lovely ferns and tropical plants in the richest luxuriance, and of every conceivable shade of amber and green. It was a charming spot. The patch of forest was separated from the unbroken line of morung jungle by a beautifully sheltered glade of several hundred acres, and further broken in three places by avenue-looking openings, disclosing peeps of the black and gloomy-looking mass of impenetrable forest beyond.

In the first of these openings we were directed to take up a position, while the pad elephants and a crowd of beaters went to the edge of the patch of forest and began beating up to us. Immense numbers of genuine jungle fowl were calling in all directions, and flying right across the opening in numerous coveys. They are beautifully marked with black and golden plumes round the neck, and I determined to shoot a few by-and-bye to send home to friends, who I knew would prize them as invaluable material in dressing hooks for fly-fishing. The crashing of the trees, as the elephants forced their way through the thick forest, or tore off huge branches as they struggled amid the matted vegetation, kept us all on the alert. The first place was however a blank, and we moved on to the next. We had not long to wait, for a fierce din inside the jungle, and the excited cries of the beaters, apprised us that game of some sort was

afoot. We were eagerly watching, and speculating on the cause of the uproar, when a very fine half-grown tiger cub sprang out of some closely growing fern, and dashed across the narrow opening so quickly, that ere we had time to raise a gun, he had disappeared in some heavy jhamun jungle on the further side of the path.

We hurried round as fast as we could to intercept him, should he attempt to break on ahead; and leaving some men to rally the mahouts, and let them know that there was a tiger afoot, we were soon in our places, and ready to give the cub a warm reception, should he again show his stripes. It was not long ere he did so. I spied him stealing along the edge of the jungle, evidently intending to make a rush back past the opening he had just crossed, and outflank the line of beater elephants. I fired and hit him in the forearm; he rolled over roaring with rage, and then descrying his assailants, he bounded into the open, and as well as his wound would allow him, came furiously down at the charge. In less time however than it takes to write it, he had received three bullets in his body, and tumbled down a lifeless heap. We raised a cheer which brought the beaters and elephants quickly to the spot. In coming through a thickly wooded part of the forest, with numerous long and pliant creepers intertwisted into a confused tangle of rope-like ligaments, the old Juddeah elephant tore down one of the long vines, and dislodged an angry army of venomous red ants on the occupants of the guddee, or cushioned seat on the elephant's pad. The ants proved formidable assailants. There were two or three Baboos or native gentlemen, holding on to the ropes, chewing pān, and enjoying the scene, but the red ants were altogether more than they had bargained for. Recognising the Baboos as the immediate cause of their disturbance, they attacked them with venomous pertinacity. The mahout fairly yelled with pain, and one of the Baboos, smarting from the fiery bites of the furious insects, toppled clean backwards

into the undergrowth, showing an undignified pair of heels. The other two danced on the guddee, sweeping and thrashing the air, the cushion, and their clothes, with their cummerbunds, in the vain effort to free themselves of their angry assailants. The guddee was literally covered with ants; it looked an animated red mass, and the wretched Baboos made frantic efforts to shake themselves clear. They were dreadfully bitten, and reaching the open, they slid off the elephant, and even on the ground continued their saltatory antics before finally getting rid of their ferocious assailants.

In forest shooting the red ant is one of the most dreaded pests of the jungle. If a colony gets dislodged from some overhanging branch, and is landed in your howdah, the best plan is to evacuate your stronghold as quickly as you can, and let the attendants clear away the invaders. Their bite is very painful, and they take such tenacious hold, that rather than quit their grip, they allow themselves to be decapitated and leave their head and formidable forceps sticking in your flesh.

Other dreaded foes in the forest jungle are the Bhowra or ground bees, which are more properly a kind of hornet. If by evil chance your elephant should tread on their mound-like nest, instantly an angry swarm of venomous and enraged hornets comes buzzing about your ears. Your only chance is to squat down, and envelope yourself completely in a blanket. Old sportsmen, shooting in forest jungle, invariably take a blanket with them in the howdah, to ensure themselves protection in the event of an attack by these blood-thirsty creatures. The thick matted creepers too are a great nuisance, for which a bill-hook or sharp kookree is an invaluable adjunct to the other paraphernalia of the march. I have seen a mahout swept clean off the elephant's back by these tenacious creepers, and the elephants themselves are sometimes unable to break through the tangle of sinewy, lithe

cords, which drape the huge forest trees, hanging in slender festoons from every branch. Some of them are prickly, and as the elephant slowly forces his way through the mass of pendent swaying cords, they lacerate and tear the mahout's clothes and skin, and appropriate his puggree. As you crouch down within the shelter of your howdah, you can't help pitying the poor wretch, and incline to think that, after all, shooting in grass jungle has fewer drawbacks and is preferable to forest shooting.

One of the drivers reported that he had seen a bear in the jungle, and we saw the earth of one not far from where the young tiger had fallen; it was the lair of the sloth bear or *Ursus labialis*, so called from his long pendent upper lip. His spoor is very easily distinguished from that of any other animal; the ball of the foot shows a distinct round impression, and about an inch to an inch and a half further on, the impressions of the long curved claws are seen. He uses these long claws to tear up ant hills, and open hollow decaying trees, to get at the honey within, of which he is very fond. We went after the bear, and were not long in discovering his whereabouts, and a well-directed shot from S. added him to our bag. The best bear shooting in India perhaps is in CHOTA NAGPOOR, but this does not come within the limits of my present volume. We now beat slowly through the wood, keeping a bright look out for ants and hornets, and getting fine shooting at the numerous jungle fowl which flew about in amazing numbers.

The forest trees in this patch of jungle were very fine. The hill seerees, with its feathery foliage and delicate clusters of white bugle-shaped blossom; the semul or cotton tree, with its wonderful wealth of magnificent crimson flowers; the birch-looking sheeshum or sissoo; the sombre-looking sal; the shining, leathery-leafed bhur, with its immense over-arching limbs, and the crisp, curly-leafed elegant-looking jhamun or Indian olive, formed a paradise of sylvan

beauty, on which the eye dwelt till it was sated with the woodland loveliness.

In recrossing the dhar or water-course, we took care to avoid the quicksands, and as we did not expect to fall in with another tiger, we indulged in a little general firing. I shot a fine buck through the spine, and we bagged several deer, and no less than five florican; this bird is allied to the bustard family, and has beautiful drooping feathers, hanging in plumy pendants of deep black and pure white, intermingled in the most graceful and showy manner. The male is a magnificent bird, and has perhaps as fine plumage as any bird on the border; the flesh yields the most delicate eating of any game bird I know; the slices of mingled brown and white from the breast are delicious. The birds are rather shy, generally getting up a long way in front of the line, and moving with a slow, rather clumsy, flight, not unlike the flight of the white earth owl. They run with great swiftness, and are rather hard to kill, unless hit about the neck and head. There are two sorts, the lesser and the greater, the former also called the bastard florican. Altogether they are noble-looking birds, and the sportsman is always glad to add as many florican as he can to his bag.

We were now nearing the locality of the fierce fire of the morning; it was still blazing in a long extended line of flame, and we witnessed an incident without parallel in the experience of any of us. I fired at and wounded a large stag; it was wounded somewhere in the side, and seemed very hard hit indeed. Maddened probably by terror and pain, it made straight for the line of fire, and bounded unhesitatingly right into the flame. We saw it distinctly go clean through the flames, but we could not see whether it got away with its life, as the elephants would not go up to the fire. At all events, the stag went right through his fiery ordeal, and was lost to us. We started numerous hares close to camp, and S. bowled over several. They are very common

in the short grass jungle, where the soil is sandy, and are frequently to be found among thin jowah jungle; they afford good sport for coursing, but are neither so fleet, nor so large, nor such good eating as the English hare. In fact, they are very dry eating, and the best way to cook them is to jug them, or make a hunter's pie, adding portions of partridge, quail, or plover, with a few mushrooms, and a modicum of ham or bacon if these are procurable.

We reached camp pretty late, and sent off venison, birds, and other spoils to Mrs. S. and to Inamputtee factory. Our bag showed a diversity of spoil, consisting of one tiger, seven hog-deer, one bear (*Ursus labialis*), seventeen jungle fowl, five florican, and six hares. It was no bad bag considering that during most of the day we had been beating solely for tiger. We could have shot many more deer and jungle fowl, but we never try to shoot more than are needed to satisfy the wants of the camp. Were we to attempt to shoot at all the deer and pig that we see, the figures would reach very large totals. As a rule, therefore, the records of Indian sportsmen give no idea of the vast quantities of game that are put up and never fired at. It would be the very wantonness of destruction, to shoot animals not wanted for some specific purpose, unless, indeed, you were waging an indiscriminate war of extermination, in a quarter where their numbers were a nuisance and prejudicial to crops. In that case, your proceedings would not be dignified by the name of sport.

After a few more days' shooting, the incidents of which were pretty much like those I have been describing, I started back for the factory. I sent my horse on ahead, and took five elephants with me to beat up for game on the homeward route. Close to camp a fine buck got up in front of me. I broke both his forelegs with my first shot, but the poor brute still managed to hobble along. It was in some very dense patair jungle, and I had considerable difficulty in

bringing him to bag. When we reached the ghat or ferry, I ordered Geerdharree Jha's mahout to cross with his elephant. The brute, however, refused to cross the river alone, and in spite of all the driver could do, she insisted on following the rest. I got down, and some of the other drivers got out the hobbles and bound them round her legs. In spite of these she still seemed determined to follow us. She shook the bedding and other articles with which she was loaded off her back, and made a frantic effort to follow us through the deep sand. The iron chains cut into her legs, and, afraid that she might do herself an irreparable injury, I had her tied up to a tree, and left her trumpeting and making an indignant lamentation at being separated from the rest of the line.

The elephant seems to be quite a social animal. I have frequently seen cases where, after having been in company together for a lengthened hunt, they have manifested great reluctance to separate. In leaving the line, I have often noticed the single elephant looking back at his comrades, and giving vent to his disappointment and disapproval by grunts and trumpetings of indignant protest. We left the refractory hathee tied up to her tree, and as we crossed the long rolling billows of burning sand that lay athwart our course, she was soon lost to view. I shot a couple more hog-deer, and got several plover and teal in the patches of water that lay in some of the hollows among the sandbanks. I fired at a huge alligator basking in the sun, on a sandbank close to the stream. The bullet hit him somewhere in the forearm, and he made a tremendous sensation header into the current. From the agitation in the water, he seemed not to appreciate the leaden message which I had sent him.

We found the journey through the soft yielding sand very fatiguing, and especially trying to the eyes. When not shooting, it is a very wise precaution to wear eye-preservers or "goggles." They are a great relief to the eyes, and the best, I think, are the neutral tinted. During the west winds,

when the atmosphere is loaded with fine particles of irritating sand and dust, these goggles are very necessary, and are a great protection to the sight.

Another prudent precaution is to have the back of one's shirt or coat slightly padded with cotton and quilted. The heat prevents one wearing thick clothes, and there is no doubt that the action of the direct rays of the burning sun all down the back on the spinal cord, is very injurious, and may be a fruitful cause of sunstroke. It is certainly productive of great lassitude and weariness. I used to wear a thin quilted sort of shield made of cotton-drill, which fastened round the shoulders and waist. It does not incommode one's action in any particular, and is, I think, a great protection against the fierce rays of the sun. Many prefer the puggree as a head-piece. It is undeniably a fine thing when one is riding on horseback, as it fits close to the head, does not catch the wind during a smart trot or canter, and is therefore not easily shaken off. For riding I think it preferable to all other head-dresses. A good thick puggree is a great protection to the back of the head and neck, the part of the body which of all others requires protection from the sun. It feels rather heavy at first, but one gets used to it, and it does not shade the eyes and face. These are the two gravest objections to it, but for comfort, softness, and protection to the head and neck, I do not think it can be surpassed.

After crossing the sand, we again entered some thin scrubby acacia jungle, with here and there a moist swampy nullah, with rank green patair jungle growing in the cool dank shade. Here we disturbed a colony of pigs, but the four mahouts being Mahommedans I did not fire. As we went along, one of my men called my attention to some footprints near a small lagoon. On inspection we found they were rhinoceros tracks evidently of old date. These animals are often seen in this part of the country, but

are more numerous farther north, in the great morung forest jungle.

A very noticeable feature in these jungles was the immense quantity of bleached ghastly skeletons of cattle. This year had been a most disastrous one for cattle. Enormous numbers had been swept off by disease, and in many villages bordering on the morung the herds had been well-nigh exterminated. Little attention is paid to breeding. In some districts, such as the Mooteeharree and Mudhobunnee division, fine cart-bullocks are bred, carefully handled and tended, and fetch high prices. In Kurruckpore, beyond the Ganges in Bhaugulpore district, cattle of a small breed, hardy, active, staunch, and strong, are bred in great numbers, and are held in great estimation for agricultural requirements; but in these Koosee jungles the bulls are often ill-bred, weedy brutes, and the cows being much in excess of a fair proportion of bulls, a deal of in-breeding takes place; unmatured young bulls roam about with the herd, and the result is a crowd of cattle that succumb to the first ailment, so that the land is littered with their bones.

The bullock being indispensable to the Indian cultivator, bull calves are prized, taken care of, well nurtured and well fed. The cow calves are pretty much left to take care of themselves; they are thin, miserable, half-starved brutes, and the short-sighted ryot seems altogether to forget that it is on these miserable withered specimens that he must depend for his supply of plough- and cart-bullocks. The matter is most shamefully neglected. Government occasionally through its officers, experimental farms, etc., tries to get good sire stock for both horses and cattle, but as long as the dams are bad—mere weeds, without blood, bone, muscle, or stamina, the produce must be bad. As a pretty well established and general rule, the ryots look after their bullocks,—they recognise their value, and appreciate their utility, but the cows fare badly, and from all I have myself seen, and from the

concurrent testimony of many observant friends in the rural districts, I should say that the breed has become much deteriorated.

Old planters constantly tell you, that such cattle as they used to get are not now procurable for love or money. Within the last twenty years prices have more than doubled, because the demand for good plough-bullocks has been more urgent, as a consequence of increased cultivation, and the supply is not equal to the demand. Attention to the matter is imperative, and planters would be wise in their own interests to devote a little time and trouble to disseminating sound ideas about the selection of breeding stock, and the principles of rearing and raising stock among their ryots and dependants. Every factory should be able to breed its own cattle, and supply its own requirements for plough- and cart-bullocks. It would be cheaper in the end, and it would undoubtedly be a blessing to the country to raise the standard of cattle used in agricultural work.

To return from this digression. We plodded on and on, weary, hot, and thirsty, expecting every moment to see the ghat and my waiting horse. But the country here is so wild, the river takes such erratic courses during the annual floods, and the district is so secluded and so seldom visited by Europeans or factory servants, that my syce had evidently lost his way. After we had crossed innumerable streams, and laboriously traversed mile upon mile of burning sand, we gave up the attempt to find the ghat, and made for Nathpore.

Nathpore was formerly a considerable town, not far from the Nepaul border, a flourishing grain mart and emporium for the fibres, gums, spices, timbers, and other productions of a wide frontier. There was a busy and crowded bazaar, long streets of shops and houses, and hundreds of boats lying in the stream beside the numerous ghats, taking in and discharging their cargoes. It may give a faint idea of the destructive force of an Indian stream like the Koosee when it

is in full flood, to say that this once flourishing town is now but a handful of miserable huts. Miles of rich lands, once clothed with luxuriant crops of rice, indigo, and waving grain, are now barren reaches of burning sand. The bleached skeletons of mango, jackfruit, and other trees, stretch out their leafless and lifeless branches, to remind the spectator of the time when their foliage rustled in the breeze, when their lusty limbs bore rich clusters of luscious fruit, and when the din of the bazaar resounded beneath their welcome shade. A fine old lady still lived in a two-storied brick building, with quaint little darkened rooms, and a narrow verandah running all round the building. She was long past the allotted threescore years and ten, with a keen yet mildly beaming eye, and a wealth of beautiful hair as white as driven snow, neatly gathered back from her shapely forehead. She was the last remaining link connecting the present with the past glories of Nathpore. Her husband had been a planter and Zemindar. Where his vats had stood laden with rich indigo, the engulfing sand now reflected the rays of the torrid sun from its burning whiteness. She showed me a picture of the town as it appeared to her when she had been brought there many a long and weary year ago, ere yet her step had lost its lightness, and when she was in the bloom of her bridal life. There was a fine broad boulevard, shadowed by splendid trees, on which she and her husband had driven in their carriage of an evening, through crowds of prosperous and contented traders and cultivators. The hungry river had swept all this away. Subsisting on a few precarious rents of some little plots of ground that it had spared, all that remained of a once princely estate, this good old lady lived her lonely life cheerful and contented, never murmuring or repining. The river had not spared even the graves of her departed dear ones. Since I left that part of the country I hear that she has been called away to join those who had gone before her.

I arrived at her house late in the afternoon. I had never been at Nathpore before, although the place was well known to me by reputation. What a wreck it presented as our elephants marched through. Ruined, dismantled, crumbling temples; masses of masonry half submerged in the swift running, treacherous, undermining stream; huge trees lying prostrate, twisted and jammed together where the angry flood had hurled them; bare unsightly poles and piles, sticking from the water at every angle, reminding us of the granaries and godowns that were wont to be filled with the agricultural wealth of the districts for miles around; hard metalled roads cut abruptly off, and bridges with only half an arch, standing lonely and ruined half way in the muddy current that swept noiselessly past the deserted city. It was a scene of utter waste and desolation.

The lady I mentioned made me very welcome, and I was struck by her unaffected cheerfulness and gentleness. She was a gentlewoman indeed, and though reduced in circumstances, surrounded by misfortunes, and daily and hourly reminded by the scattered wreck around her of her former wealth and position, she bore all with exemplary fortitude, and to the full extent of her scanty means she relieved the sorrows and ailments of the natives. They all loved and respected, and I could not help admiring and honouring her.

She pointed out to me, far away on the south-east horizon, the place where the river ran in its shallow channel when she first came to Nathpore. During her experience it had cut into and overspread more than twenty miles of country, turning fertile fields into arid wastes of sand; sweeping away factories, farms, and villages; and changing the whole face of the country from a fruitful landscape into a wilderness of sand and swamp.

My horse came up in the evening, and I rode over to Inamputtee, leaving my kindly hostess in her solitude.

CHAPTER XXV.

Exciting jungle scene—The camp—All quiet—Advent of the cowherds—A tiger close by—Proceed to the spot—Encounter between tigress and buffaloes—Strange behaviour of the elephant—Discovery and capture of four cubs—Joyful return to camp—Death of the tigress—Night encounter with a leopard—The haunts of the tiger and our shooting grounds.

ONE of the most exciting and deeply interesting scenes I ever witnessed in the jungles, was on the occasion I have referred to in a former chapter, when speaking of the number of young given by the tigress at a birth. It was in the month of March, at the village of Ryseree, in Bhaugulpore. I had been encamped in the midst of twenty-four beautiful tanks, the history and construction of which were lost in the mists of tradition. The villagers had a story that these tanks were the work of a mighty giant, Bheema, with whose aid and that of his brethren they had been excavated in a single night.

At all events, they were now covered with a wild tangle of water lilies and acquatic plants; well stocked with magnificent fish, and an occasional scaly monster of a saurian. They were the haunt of vast quantities of widgeon, teal, whistlers, mallard, ducks, snipe, curlew, blue fowl, and the usual varied *habitués* of an exceptionally good Indian lake. In the vicinity hares were numerous, and in the thick jungle bordering the tanks in places, and consisting mostly of nurkool and wild rose, hog-deer and wild pig were abundant. The dried-up bed of an old arm of the Koosee was quite close to my camp, and abounded in sandpiper, and golden, grey, goggle-eyed, and stilted plover, besides other game.

It was indeed a favourite camping spot, and the village was inhabited by a hardy, independent set of Gwallas, Koormees, and agriculturists, with whom I was a prime favourite.

I was sitting in my tent, going over some village accounts with the village putwarrie, and my gomasta. A possé of villagers were grouped under the grateful shade of a gnarled old mango tree, whose contorted limbs bore evidence to the violence of many a *tufan*, or tempest, which it had weathered. The usual confused clamour of tongues was rising from this group, and the subject of debate was the eternal "pice." Behind the bank, and in the rear of the tent, the cook and his mate were disembowelling a hapless *moorghee*, a fowl whose decapitation had just been effected with a huge jagged old cavalry sword, of which my cook was not a little proud: and on the strength of which he adopted fierce military airs, and gave an extra turn to his well-oiled moustache when he went abroad for a holiday.

Farther to the rear a line of horses were picketed, including my man-eating demon the white Cabool stallion, my gentle country-bred mare Motee—the pearl—and my handsome little pony mare, formerly my hockey or polo steed, a present from a gallant sportsman and rare good fellow, as good a judge of a horse, or a criminal, as ever sat on a bench.

Behind the horses each manacled by weighty chains, with his ponderous trunk and ragged-looking tail swaying to and fro with a never-ceasing motion, stood a line of ten elephants. Their huge leathery ears flapped lazily, and ever and anon one or other would seize a mighty branch, and belabour his corrugated sides to free himself of the detested and troublesome flies. The elephants were placidly munching their *charra* (bait, or food), and occasionally giving each other a dry bath in the shape of a shower of sand. There was a monotonous clank of chains, and an occasional deep abdominal rumble like distant thunder. All over the camp there was a confused subdued medley of sound. A hum from

the argumentative villagers, a lazy flop in the tank as a raho rose to the surface, an occasional outburst from the ducks, an angry clamour from the water-hens and blue-fowl. My dogs were lying round me blinking and winking, and making an occasional futile snap at an imaginary fly or flea. It was a drowsy and peaceful scene. I was nearly dropping off to sleep, from the heat and the monotonous drone of the putwarrie, who was intoning nasally some formidable document about fishery rights and privileges.

Suddenly there was a hush. Every sound seemed to stop simultaneously as if by pre-arranged concert. Then three men were seen rushing madly along the elevated ridge surrounding one of the tanks. I recognised one of my peons, and with him two cowherds. Their head-dresses were all disarranged, and their parted lips, heaving chests, and eyes blazing with excitement, showed that they were brimful of some unusual message.

Now arose such a bustle in the camp as no description could adequately portray. The elephants trumpeted and piped; the *syces*, or grooms, came rushing up with eager queries; the villagers bustled about like so many ants aroused by the approach of a hostile foe; my pack of terriers yelped out in chorus; the pony neighed; the Cabool stallion plunged about; my servants came rushing from the shelter of the tent verandah with disordered dress; the ducks rose in a quacking crowd, and circled round and round the tent; and the cry arose of "Bagh! Bagh! Khodawund! Arree Bap re Bap! Ram Ram, Seeta Ram!"

Breathless with running, the men now tumbled up, hurriedly salaamed, and then each with gasps and choking stops, and pell-mell volubility, and amid a running fire of cries, queries, and interjections from the mob, began to unfold their tale. There was an infuriated tigress at the other side of the nullah, or dry watercourse, she had attacked a herd of buffaloes, and it was believed that she had cubs.

Already Debnarain Singh was getting his own pad elephant caparisoned, and my bearer was diving under my camp bed for my gun and cartridges. Knowing the little elephant to be a fast walker, and fairly staunch, I got on her back, and accompanied by the gomasta and mahout we set out, followed by the peon and herdsmen to show us the way.

I expected two friends, officers from Calcutta, that very day, and wished not to kill the tigress but to keep her for our combined shooting next day. We had not proceeded far when, on the other side of the nullah, we saw dense clouds of dust rising, and heard a confused, rushing, trampling sound, mingled with the clashing of horns, and the snorting of a herd of angry buffaloes.

It was the wildest sight I have ever seen in connection with animal life. The buffaloes were drawn together in the form of a crescent; their eyes glared fiercely, and as they advanced in a series of short runs, stamping with their hoofs, and angrily lashing their tails, their horns would come together with a clanging, clattering crash, and they would paw the sand, snort and toss their heads and behave in the most extraordinary manner.

The cause of all this commotion was not far to seek. Directly in front, retreating slowly, with stealthy, prowling, crawling steps, and an occasional short, quick leap or bound to one side or the other, was a magnificent tigress, looking the very personification of baffled fury. Ever and anon she crouched down to the earth, tore up the sand with her claws, lashed her tail from side to side, and with lips retracted, long moustaches quivering with wrath, and hateful eyes scintillating with rage and fury, she seemed to meditate an attack on the angry buffaloes. The serried array of clashing horns, and the ponderous bulk of the herd, seemed however to daunt the snarling vixen; at their next rush she would bound back a few paces, crouch down, growl, and be

forced to move back again, by the short, blundering rush of the crowd.

All the calves and old cows were in the rear of the herd, and it was not a little comical to witness their ungainly attitudes. They would stretch their clumsy necks, and shake their heads, as if they did not rightly understand what was going on. Finding that if they stopped too long to indulge in curiosity, there was a danger of their getting separated from the fighting members of the herd, they would make a stupid, headlong, lumbering lurch forward, and jostle each other in their blundering panic.

It was a grand sight. The tigress was the embodiment of lithe and savage beauty, but her features expressed the wildest baffled rage. I could have shot the striped vixen over and over again, but I wished to keep her for my friends and I was thrilled with the excitement of such a novel scene.

Suddenly our elephant trumpeted, and shied quickly to one side, from something lying on the ground. Curling up its trunk it began backing and piping at a prodigious rate.

"Hullo! what's the matter now?" said I to Debnarain.

"God only knows," said he.

"A young tiger!" "Bagh ka butcha!" screams our mahout, and regardless of the elephant or of our cries to stop, he scuttled down the pad rope like a monkey down a backstay, and clutching a young dead tiger cub, threw it up to Debnarain; it was about the size of a small poodle, and had evidently been trampled by the pursuing herd of buffaloes.

"There may be others," said the gomasta; and peering into every bush, we went slowly on.

The elephant now showed decided symptoms of dislike and a reluctance to approach a particular dense clump of grass.

A sounding whack on the head, however, made her quicken her steps, and thrusting the long stalks aside, she discovered for us three blinking little cubs, brothers of the defunct, and doubtless part of the same litter. Their eyes were scarcely open, and they lay huddled together like three enormous striped kittens, and spat at us and bristled their little moustaches much as an angry cat would do. All the four were males.

It was not long ere I had them carefully wrapped in the mahout's blanket. Overjoyed at our good fortune, we left the excited buffaloes still executing their singular war-dance, and the angry tigress, robbed of her whelps, consuming her soul in baffled fury.

We heard her roaring through the night, close to camp, and on my friends' arrival, we beat her up next morning, and she fell pierced by three bullets, after a fierce and determined charge. We came upon her across the nullah, and her mind was evidently made up to fight. Nearly all the villagers had turned out with the line of elephants. Before we had time to order them away, she came down upon the line, roaring furiously, and bounding over the long grass—a most magnificent sight.

My first bullet took her full in the chest, and before she could make good her charge, a ball each from Pat and Captain G. settled her career. She was beautifully striped, and rather large for a tigress, measuring nine feet three inches.

It was now a question with me, how to rear the three interesting orphans; we thought a slut from some of the villages would prove the best wet nurse, and tried accordingly to get one, but could not. In the meantime an unhappy goat was pounced on and the three young tigers took to her teats as if "to the manner born." The poor Nanny screamed tremendously at first sight of them, but she soon got accustomed to them, and when they grew a little

bigger, she would often playfully butt at them with her horns.

The little brutes throve wonderfully, and soon developed such an appetite that I had to get no less than six goats to satisfy their constant thirst. I kept the cubs for over two months, and I shall not soon forget the excitement I caused, when my boat stopped at Sahibgunge, and my goats, tiger cubs, and attendants, formed a procession from the ghat or landing-place, to the railway station.

Soldiers, guards, engineers, travellers, and crowds of natives surrounded me, and at every station the guard's van, with my novel menagerie, was the centre of attraction. I sold the cubs to Jamrach's agent in Calcutta for a very satisfactory price. Two of them were very powerful, finely marked, handsome animals; the third had always been sickly, had frequent convulsions, and died a few days after I sold it. I was afterwards told that the milk diet was a mistake, and that I should have fed them on raw meat. However, I was very well satisfied on the whole with the result of my adventure.

I had another in the same part of the country, which at the time was a pretty good test of the state of my nerves.

I was camped out at the village of Purindaha, on the edge of a gloomy sal forest, which was reported to contain numerous leopards. The villagers were a mixed lot of low-caste Hindoos, and Nepaulese settlers. They had been fighting with the factory, and would not pay up their rents, and I was trying, with every probability of success, to make an amicable arrangement with them. At all events, I had so far won them round, that they were willing to talk to me. They came to the tent and listened quietly, and except on the subject of rent, we got on in the most friendly manner.

It was the middle of April. The heat was intense. The

whole atmosphere had that coppery look which denotes extreme heat, and the air was loaded with fine yellow dust, which the daily west wind bore on its fever-laden wings, to disturb the lungs and tempers of all good Christians. The *kanats*, or canvas walls of the tent, had all been taken down for coolness, and my camp bed lay in one corner, open all round to the outside air, but only sheltered from the dew. It had been a busy day. I had been going over accounts, and talking to the villagers till I was really hoarse. After a light dinner I lay down on my bed, but it was too close and hot to sleep. By-and-bye the various sounds died out. The tom-toming ceased in the village. My servants suspended their low muttered gossip round the cook's fire, wrapped themselves in their white cloths, and dropped into slumber. "Toby," "Nettle," "Whisky," "Pincher," and my other terriers, resembled so many curled-up hairy balls, and were in the land of dreams. Occasionally an owl would give a melancholy hoot from the forest, or a screech owl would raise a momentary and damnable din. At intervals, the tinkle of a cow-bell sounded faintly in the distance. I tossed restlessly, thinking of various things, till I must have dropped off into an uneasy fitful sleep. I know not how long I had been dozing, but of a sudden I felt myself wide awake, though with my eyes yet firmly closed.

I was conscious of some terrible unknown impending danger. I had experienced the same feeling before on waking from a nightmare, but I knew that the danger now was real. I felt a shrinking horror, a terrible and nameless fear, and for the life of me I could not move hand or foot. I was lying on my side, and could distinctly hear the thumping of my heart. A cold sweat broke out behind my ears and over my neck and chest. I could analyse my every feeling, and I knew there was some PRESENCE in the tent, and that I was in instant and imminent peril. Suddenly in the distance a pariah dog

gave a prolonged melancholy howl. As if this had broken the spell which had hitherto bound me, I opened my eyes, and within ten inches of my face, there was a handsome leopardess gazing steadily at me. Our eyes met, and how long we confronted each other I know not. It must have been some minutes. Her eyes contracted and expanded, the pupil elongated and then opened out into a round lustrous globe. I could see the lithe tail oscillating at its extreme tip, with a gentle waving motion, like that of a cat when hunting birds in the garden. I seemed to possess no will. I believe I was under a species of fascination, but we continued our steady stare at each other.

Just then, there was a movement by some of the horses. The leopard slowly turned her head, and I grasped the revolver which lay under my pillow. The beautiful spotted monster turned her head for an instant, and showed her teeth, and then with one bound went through the open side of the tent. I fired two shots, which were answered with a roar. The din that followed would have frightened the devil. It was a beautiful clear night, with a moon at the full, and everything showed as plainly as at noonday. The servants uttered exclamations of terror. The terriers went into an agony of yelps and barks. The horses snorted, and tried to get loose, and my chowkeydar, who had been asleep on his watch, thinking a band of dacoits were on us, began laying round him with his staff, shouting, *Chor, chor! lagga, lagga, lagga!* that is, "thief, thief! lay on, lay on, lay on!"

The leopard was hit, and evidently in a terrible temper. She halted not thirty paces from the tent, beside a jhamun tree, and seemed undecided whether to go on or return and wreak her vengeance on me. That moment decided her fate. I snatched down my Express rifle, which was hanging in two loops above my bed, and shot her right through the heart.

I never understood how she could have made her way past dogs, servants, horses, and watchman, right into the tent, without raising some alarm. It must have been more from curiosity than any hostile design. I know that my nerves were very rudely shaken, but I became the hero of the Purindaha villagers. I believe that my night adventure with the leopardess did more to bring them round to a settlement than all my eloquence and figures.

The river Koosee, on the banks of which, and in the long grass plains adjacent, most of the incidents I have recorded took place, takes its rise at the base of Mount Everest, and, after draining nearly the whole of Eastern Nepaul, emerges by a deep gorge from the hills at the north-west corner of Purneah. The stream runs with extreme velocity. It is known as a snow stream. The water is always cold, and generally of a milky colour, containing much fine white sand. No sooner does it leave its rocky bed than it tears through the flat country by numerous channels. It is subject to very sudden rises. A premonitory warning of these is generally given. The water becomes of a turbid, almost blood-like colour. Sometimes I have seen the river rise over thirty feet in twenty-four hours. The melting of the snow often makes a raging torrent, level from bank to bank, where only a few hours before a horse could have forded the stream without wetting the girths of the saddle.

In 1876 the largest channel was a swift broad stream called the Dhaus. The river is very capricious, seldom flowing for any length of time in one channel. This is owing in great measure to the amount of silt it carries with it from the hills, in its impetuous progress to the plains.

In these dry watercourses, among the sand ridges, beside the humid marshy hollows, and among the thick strips of grass jungle, tigers are always to be found. They are much

less numerous now, however, than formerly. As a rule, there is no shelter in these water-worn, flood-ravaged tracts and sultry jungles. Occasionally a few straggling plantain trees, a clump of sickly-looking bamboos, a cluster of tall shadowless palms, marks the site of a deserted village. All else is waving grass, withered and dry. The villages, inhabited mostly by a few cowherds, boatmen, and rice-farmers, are scattered at wide intervals. In the shooting season, and when the hot winds are blowing, the only shadow on the plain is that cast by the dense volumes of lurid smoke, rising in blinding clouds from the jungle fires.

According to the season, animal life fluctuates strangely. During the rains, when the river is in full flood, and much of the country submerged, most of the animals migrate to the North, buffaloes and wild pig alone keeping possession of the higher ridges in the neighbourhood of their usual haunts.

The contrasts presented on these plains at different seasons of the year are most remarkable. In March and April they are parched up, brown, and dead; great black patches showing the track of a destroying fire, the fine brown ash from the burnt grass penetrating the eyes and nostrils, and sweeping along in eddying and blinding clouds. They then look the very picture of an untenable waste, a sea of desolation, whose limits blend in the extreme distance with the shimmering coppery horizon. In the rainy season these arid-looking wastes are covered with tall-plumed, reed-like, waving grass, varying from two to ten feet in height, stretching in an unbroken sweep as far as the eye can reach, except where an abrupt line shows that the swift river has its treacherous course. After the rains, progress through the jungle is dangerous. Quicksands and beds of tenacious mud impede one at every step. The rich vegetation springs up green and vigorous, with a rapidity only to be seen in the Tropics. But what a glorious hunting

ground! What a preserve for Nimrod! Deer forest, or heathered moor, can never compete with the old Koosee Dyarahs for abundance of game and thrilling excitement in sport. My genial, happy, loyal comrades too—while memory lasts the recollection of your joyous, frank, warm-hearted comradeship shall never fade.

BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Sport and Work on the Nepaul Frontier;

OR,

Twelve Years' Sporting Reminiscences of an Indigo Planter.

BY "MAORI,"

AUTHOR OF "TIRHOOT RHYMES," ETC., ETC.

MACMILLAN & CO., LONDON, 1878.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

A graphic and unvarnished account of experiences gained during twelve years of a planter's life in North Behar. Animated and even picturesque.—*Saturday Review.*

Englishmen will read his book both with pleasure and profit. Has the art of communicating information in a very agreeable way—exceedingly lively and versatile in the mixed contents of his chapters. Curious, interesting and most valuable. Has gone on the plan of being comprehensive and exhaustive, and has the happy knack of putting subjects in fresh and agreeable lights. Describes his sport in animated detail, graphically told. The best and most instructive chapters on the habits and pursuit of the tiger that we have ever read. The volume is well worth reading all through.—*Pall Mall Gazette and Budget.*

By far the best book of its kind we have ever read. . . . He is always bright and interesting, and at times graphically descriptive, the chapters devoted to tiger shooting being notably so. His remarks are pointed and sound, and it would be well for our rule in India if they were carefully attended to.—*Examiner.*

He wields the pen with equal address and success. His description of the delights of tiger shooting in the Koosee jungles and sal forests, of

hunting trips across the Nepaul frontier, or of a grand burst after a "fighting boar," are capitally written—fresh, vigorous, and full of the true sportsman's fire. Many of them will hardly be read without a sympathetic thrill of excitement. Such a book deserves to be popular. It is gossipy without being tedious, and informatory without being dull.—*Scotsman.*

A most enjoyable record. . . . "SPORT AND WORK" gives evidence of being written by a keen sportsman. It abounds with information of every imaginable kind; and at the present time, when matters are so unsettled in the East, and public attention is so much directed in that quarter, there is no doubt it will be warmly welcomed.—*Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News.*

We have plenty of books describing the ways and manners of the army and of the civil service in India, but we know very little about the life of the pushing and thriving gentleman from Europe, who occupies India on his own account and brings his British businesslike activity to bear upon the astonished indolence of the native whose lands he cultivates and whose labour he employs. Here we see a specimen of the energetic ruling race carrying into industry and commerce the qualities by which empires are won and sustained, *etc.* The features of native life are most vividly presented in these lively pages.—*London Daily News.*

Will certainly interest all who take it into their hands. An expert with both rifle and pen, his book will well repay perusal by those who have a taste for capitally written stories about sport. We hope "Maori" will soon take pen in hand again to give the world a further instalment of his manifold experiences as a sportsman.—*Globe.*

"Maori's" former literary efforts have proved him incapable of being dry, and that lucky incapacity is here more strikingly emphasised than ever. He is the keenest of observers, and wields a pen of rare vividness and force. Excellent and manly throughout. Much real information scattered throughout the book in the pleasantest form and the most unpretentious way. Possesses great descriptive power.—*Dundee Advertiser.*

Exactly what is wanted. The author has succeeded in rendering his book one of more than ordinary interest. Written in a frank and cheery spirit. His sketches are spirited and interesting. His information about all Indian subjects is never without interest. Related with great freedom, and full of interest.—*Glasgow Herald.*

The writer of this pleasant book is well known to sportsmen all over Northern India, and his reminiscences of a dozen years' sport and work on the borders of the Nepaul Terai will be read with interest by all who have before followed his easy style of story-telling. Unconventional—dealt with in a spirit of enthusiasm. Trenchantly written, honest and without bias.—*Pioneer, India.*

The healthy open-air character of the indigo planter's life is reflected in the style and tone of the writer. Free from any attempt at sensationalism, yet sufficiently stirring to be full of interest for ordinary readers.—*Englishman, Calcutta.*

The "Maori" must be a genuine lover of nature and a true sportsman or he never could have written the descriptions he here gives. The book is studded with gems of description. The chapters on the tiger are the fullest and the best that have yet been published. Intensely interesting, marked by much vigour of expression and a bright sparkling style, the valuable and elaborate details of indigo planting, and management of the people and lands necessary to its production and preparation, are in themselves sufficient to ensure a large circle of readers. It ought to become the book of travel for the season.—*Oriental Magazine.*

Interesting and instructive. "Maori" is an eager sportsman, and one-half of his book is taken up by a stirring narrative of his adventures in field and jungle. Many of the scenes well deserve reproduction. The writer is the sort of man, honourable, high-souled, fearless and compassionate, that England is proud to own, and to whom her success in India and elsewhere is so largely due.—*Queenslander.*

One of those frank, fresh, breezy books, which by their vividness of presentation and graphic narration have almost the charm of actual experience. Given with an ease and simplicity, and yet a fulness and accuracy of information which render this unpretentious volume more valuable than many professedly instructive works. The reader forgets that he is having his experience at second hand. The book is so interesting and picturesque that the scenes to which it relates, themselves appear before him, and he follows with breathless excitement the incidents of dangerous hardihood told with a flow of sporting enthusiasm with which it abounds. A quiet analysis of native life, much wise comment, irresistible *verve* and freedom of real sport in many of its anecdotes. Its merits are so various as to render its popularity assured, and to reflect the greatest credit upon the intelligence and acumen of the author.—*Melbourne Age.*

It is only justice to say that his object of giving a full and clear idea of the life of an Anglo-Indian planter is most successfully attained. The author always writes in good spirits, his pages are animated with the moving reflex of his active life, and the life which he so enjoyed he has brought clearly and strongly before his readers.—*Australasian.*

Agreeable without pretension, and fluent without verbosity—gives us the impression of having been written by one of those manly Englishmen whose courageous energy, intelligence, and administrative capacity qualify them alike to become the pioneers of colonisation and to obtain and exercise a commanding and beneficial influence over subject races. A careful and accurate observer, etc., etc.—*Melbourne Argus.*

One of the most cheery, dashingly written, yet sensible books of the kind that we have had the pleasure of perusing. Positively thrilling recitals of hairbreadth adventures follow each other in rapid succession. The reader is irresistibly led on from chapter to chapter by the manner in which the various scenes and their incidental surroundings are made to appear before him.—*Newcastle Morning Herald.*

It is seldom we meet with a book in which abundance of striking

incident and picturesque reminiscences are dwelt upon with such vigorous facility of diction—comes to one with the interest of a long letter from an old acquaintance in which there is not one uninteresting sentence. Narrative after narrative, and incident after incident, each instinct with warm picturesque colouring, and breathing of a writer who tells of what he has seen or knows to be true. Might with advantage be added to the library of every one interested in Indian life and sport.—*Sydney Morning Herald.*

A more appropriate title for this work could not have been chosen. The volume is truly a description of sport and work. The work relates to indigo planting; the sport to nearly all the wild animals of Nepaul. The writer is a keen and enthusiastic sportsman, and evidently thinks that most of his readers are of his own way of thinking, and will peruse with interest the accounts which he gives of his adventures. We think he is right in this respect. Scattered throughout the work, like blossoms on the rich green of the forest, are descriptive passages illustrative of the habits of birds and animals. . . . . Contains a mass of information. . . . . Will be interesting to most readers, etc., etc., etc.—*Town and Country Journal.*

To all lovers of field sports, to all who can appreciate country life with lots of work and lots of play, "Maori" offers a rare book. The interest from the first page never flags—the fascination never abates—it is like a first-rate novel right through. Anent pig-sticking, all Australian horsemen must read with admiration and perhaps envy. A book of rare interest, equally suited for country house, library, and drawing-room. We recommend it to our readers with confidence.—*Australian Magazine.*

Capital descriptive picture. Varied, readable, interesting, handsomely got up and well illustrated. Would make a capital gift book.—*Sydney Mail.*

Of more than passing interest. We know of no book which can be perused with a keener relish. Well merits the success it has achieved in the London book world this season.—*Illustrated Sydney News.*

The volume so favourably reviewed by the Press of England, India, and Australia, has already been re-printed in America by Harper Brothers, New York.

"Our Australian Cousins."

By "MAORI" (The Honourable James Inglis),

AUTHOR OF "TIRHOOT RHYMES," "SPORT AND WORK ON THE NEPAUL FRONTIER," ETC., ETC.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

We need hardly say that "Maori's" book, as its name imports, is human all through. The ties of blood and kin are warm in the author. He acknowledges heartily the links which bind us Southerns to the Northern ancestral race, and he depicts our institutions, sports, works, incomings and outgoings, not in the vein of a dandified, cat-witted tourist, but in the hearty spirit of one who has come to live and take his share among us of what is going.—*Australian Magazine.*

Of the book as a whole it gives us pleasure to speak in terms of warm appreciation. The author is demonstrably a diligent and keen observer. . . . . It may be read as quickly as a novel; and, indeed, it is more interesting than are many novels. This brings us to what we deem to be Mr. Inglis's special gifts, namely, remarkably vivid and racy descriptive and narrative powers. He has a capital vocabulary, and a bright, frank, cheery, racy, graphic style which evidently carried him along easily and pleasantly in the writing, and has equally carried us along in the reading. —*Sydney Mail.*

His descriptions are outlined with broad effective touches, and his narrative rushes along with impetuous vivacity. "Our Australian Cousins" is an eminently readable book, and its stratified construction, in which alternations of light and of solid matters are presented, will in all likelihood assure for it a wider circle of readers than would have been reached had it been either exclusively trifling or strictly didactic.—*Pacific Weekly.*

Altogether this is one of the best books of Australian travel that have appeared in recent times.—*London Daily News.*

"Our Australian Cousins" is a pleasant and an entertaining book, and we shall be glad to find that it has a wide circulation.—*Sydney Morning Herald.*

The book will be found highly interesting, valuable, and entertaining. Even the faults do not seem out of place in an account of a young, vigorous, and expanding nation, proudly conscious of its abounding energy and vitality, and not indisposed to "bounce" regarding its wonderful progress and industrial achievements.—*The Scotsman.*

Its trenchant observations on colonial public life, public men, and public measures, are consequently of recent, and, therefore, more weighty, formation. Natural history is a strong element in the useful character of this book, although its main interest is the honest criticism of Australian society.—*London Daily Telegraph.*

We heartily recommend Mr. Inglis's book; among other things, he is a keen sportsman, and his description of a Kangaroo battue will delight those who love a well-told tale of slaughter.—*The Graphic.*

The style is always light, cheerful, and agreeable. The writer has great descriptive powers, and he has chosen topics and themes to write upon which are full of interest when they are ably handled. Any reading man could sit out a couple of hundred pages of his book without feeling any sense of weariness. . . . . It contains a large amount of valuable information, and it is interesting, exciting, and pleasant to read.—*Sydney Daily Telegraph.*

We can thoroughly recommend Mr. Inglis's work, and we feel sure that he has rendered a service to the public by treating his important subject in a lucid, interesting, and practical manner.—*Liverpool Daily Post.*

We have thoroughly enjoyed the perusal of "Our Australian Cousins," and warmly congratulate Mr. Inglis on his successful production. His style is plain and to the point, and the information contained is both interesting and amusing.—*European Mail.*

Mr. Inglis possesses one singular merit, not often to be found in writers upon Australia; he has the courage to expose abuses and to denounce their authors, as well as to praise the climate and to extol the riches and capabilities of the country. . . . He indulges in warmer hopes of its future than most authors, and describes its scenery and rural sports in the bright, fresh style which characterised his former volume, "Sport and Work on the Nepaul Frontier."—*The Athenæum.*

It is the characteristic and recommendation of the work that it fulfils the promise of the preface. It is naturally and frankly written, with a good deal of the ease and unreserve of private correspondence, and its author is exceedingly outspoken with respect to the flaws in the political and social life and institutions of these communities. . . . It is written in a lively and entertaining style, and it contains a fund of information respecting these colonies, besides offering some valuable suggestions for the introduction of novel industries.—*The Argus, Melbourne.*

Besides describing the legal, commercial, and legislative aspects of Australia, Mr. Inglis depicts with a skilful hand some curious adventures he met with in the social world. . . . In his broad survey of the colony he has not omitted to describe Australian forest and coast scenery, together with many of the interesting denizens of plain and river. His

sketches of his shooting expeditions are vivid, picturesque, and useful from a strictly scientific point of view.—*The London Standard.*

Mr. Inglis has written a very pleasant and a very valuable book, not for colonists only, but for those at home who wish to know what our colonies are like. . . . The portions of his book that will most please the general reader are those devoted to descriptions of the scenery, animal life, and sports of the colonies. We have seldom read fresher, healthier descriptions. . . . The scraps of natural history, too, are all exceedingly interesting, as well as some of the tales about animal sagacity. . . . The book is full of matter that will delight the sportsman and naturalist, and about which there can be no doubt of any kind.—*The Spectator.*

He (Mr. Inglis) has been a busy traveller; he has a passion for the sports of the field and the stream; he has seen something of the world; and he has the habit of close and accurate observation. These are valuable qualifications for the task he has undertaken, which is to answer the common inquiries, what the country and people are like, and what are the temptations Australia offers to the immigrant. Although his personal experience refers only to the older settlements of the west coast, in the colonies of Queensland and New South Wales, he has accomplished his purpose in a highly satisfactory manner, presenting a great amount of practical information in clear and sensible language. He modestly disclaims literary accomplishments; but his style has the merit of being simple, and well adapted to his subject, so that his book is not only a useful but a very entertaining one.—*New York Daily Tribune.*

"Our New Zealand Cousins."

BY "MAORI" (THE HONOURABLE JAMES INGLIS),

AUTHOR OF "TIRHOOT RHYMES," "SPORT AND WORK ON THE NEPAUL FRONTIER," "OUR AUSTRALIAN COUSINS," ETC., ETC.

SAMPSON LOW & CO., LONDON, 1887.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

This volume comprises a series of letters contributed by the Author, who is the Minister of Public Instruction of New South Wales, to a Sydney paper. The writer's observations of the condition of the Colony and its inhabitants are fresh and suggestive.—*London Daily News.*

The Minister of Instruction of New South Wales, as his previous books on Nepaul and Australia bear witness, is a past master in the art of writing genial, lively, gossipy notices of men and manners in the countries where he has sojourned. "Our New Zealand Cousins" is certain, therefore, of a hearty reception in the Antipodes and at home.—*The Scotsman.*

"Our New Zealand Cousins" is an interesting account of the New Zealand group of islands by a man who has visited them thoroughly at various times during the last twenty years.—*Saturday Review.*

This work is one of the most interesting and should prove one of the most useful volumes that has been published respecting New Zealand. The writer has evidently travelled much, observed much, experienced much, thought much, written much. His style is easy and free, his descriptions of scenery are graphic and strikingly true. . . . The little work, in addition to being most entertaining reading, is one of great utility and instruction.—*Auckland Evening Star.*

The publication of his book must be of benefit to these Colonies.—*New Zealand Herald and Daily Southern Cross.*

The Author of this book is well known to Australian readers as a fluent speaker and racy writer, who adds to a keen perception of what nature has done for these Colonies, an intelligent judgment of all that the

Colonists have done for themselves, and enterprising and liberal views as to a great deal more that should now be undertaken.—*Sydney Morning Herald.*

Mr. Inglis's criticisms upon the various phases of colonization in New Zealand are characterised by considerable keenness of observation and by a truly British sympathy with the energetic and intelligent development of a young country's resources.—*Sydney Daily Telegraph.*

"Our New Zealand Cousins." Under this heading, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington have reprinted in book form a series of very attractive papers on New Zealand by "Maori." . . . . The papers, which only profess to be a description of a revisit to New Zealand, are in reality much more. They are full of shrewd and pleasant observation withal, and their literary style is admirable. Indeed, in places, Mr. Inglis rises into graphic and beautiful word painting that many a more pretentious author has failed in attaining. The book . . . gives clear notions on the condition of our sister-colony, the settlement of its people, the development of its resources, and all that pertains to its growth and progress as a country.—*Sydney Evening News.*

As a work of history the book will no doubt be a valuable acquisition to a library.—*Sydney Evening News.*

Anything coming from the pen of "Maori" is sure to command respect. . . . Our author is both pertinent and practical as well, and does not hesitate to lay his hand on honest truths which needed laying bare.—*Sydney Quarterly Magazine.*

LONDON: PRINTED BY WM. CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

00058636

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 23 January, 2019